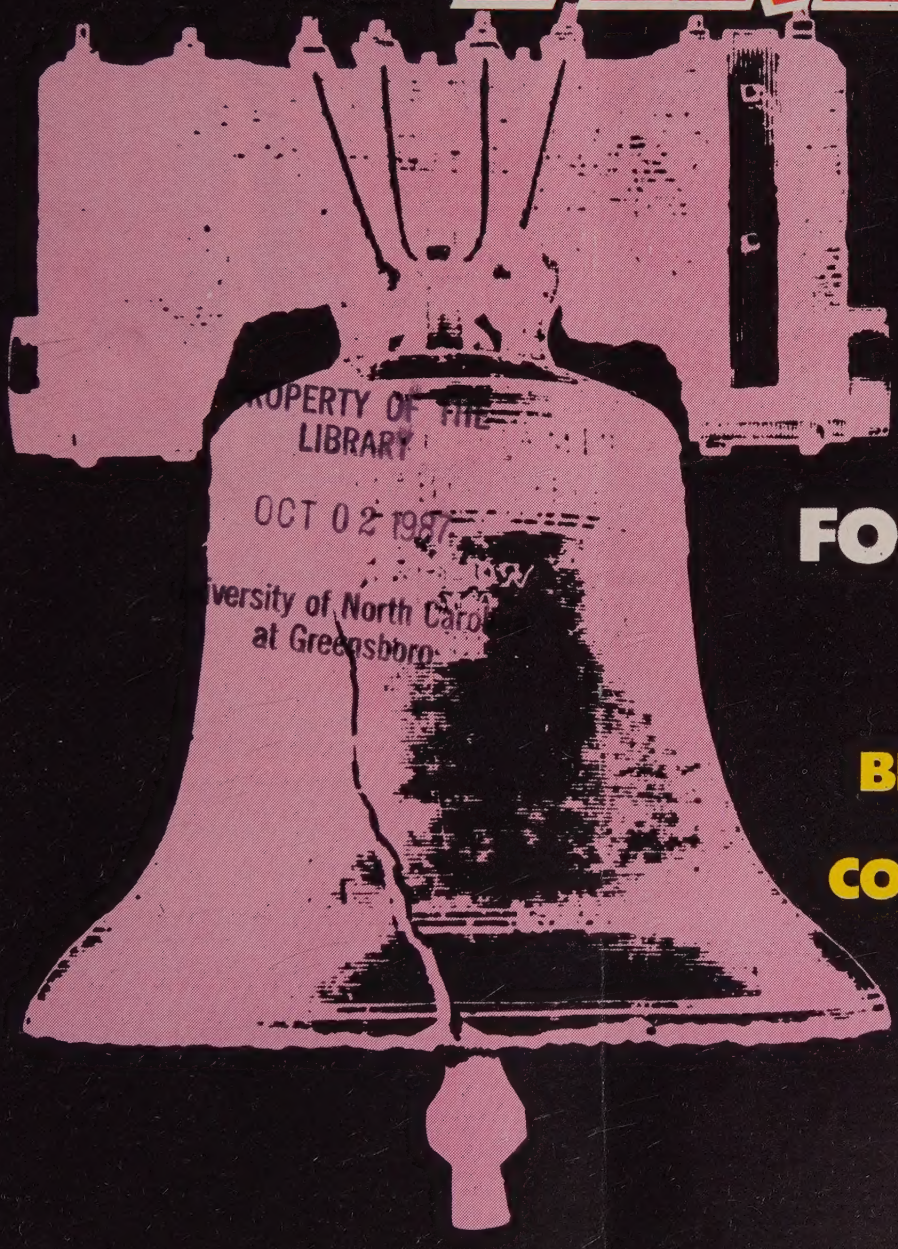
A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

VALENTIN FALIN REFLECTS ON THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II

NEW TIMES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FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

BICENTENARY OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

CAN THE LAG BE OVERCOME?

TALK WITH A HUNGARIAN ECONOMIST

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

"Early morning. The telephone rings in Churchill's bedroom. The Premier, half awake, picks up the receiver and hears: 'Winston, it's me, Stalin. I am at Calais. Now you can cross the Channel. Now it is safe.'"

This cartoon was carried in 1944 by the American Time magazine.

The second front... People talked about it and argued. Allied transport convoys via the northern seas brought tanks, aircraft, guns and lorries to Murmansk, in the U.S.S.R. The nazis mounted a veritable hunt for the convoys. Blown by mines, ablaze after direct hits from the air, their sides shattered by torpedoes and scarred by splinters from shells, many transport ships went down. And yet, only a second front in Europe could bring victory nearer, and help reduce the tragic list of losses. The Soviet people looked forward to seeing it opened in 1942, exerting a superhuman effort in the Battle of Stalingrad. They expected it in 1943 when, in the fierce clash of the tank armadas near Kursk, inflammable armour and steel were burning. "The fact that the Soviet Union is bearing the brunt of the fighting and losses during the year 1942 is well understood by the United States, and I may state that we greatly admire the magnificent resistance which your country has exhibited," Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States, wrote to Moscow.

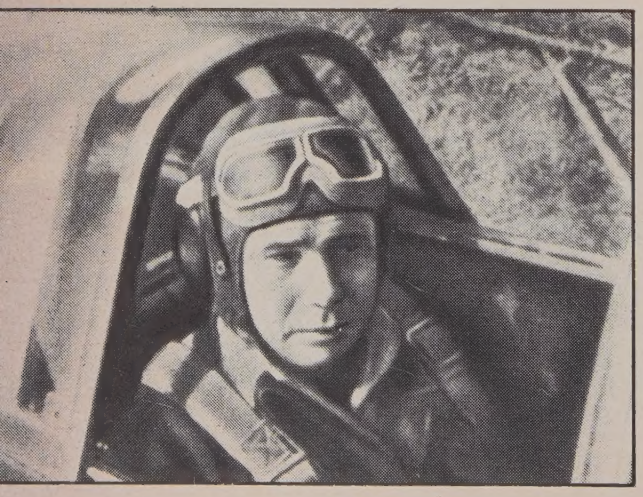
Writer Mikhail Sholokhov responded thus: "I want to speak to you directly, as the war has taught us. Our country, our people are wounded by the war. The battle is yet ahead... We call on you to join the battle...."

On June 6, 1944, the second front in Europe was opened. By that time 370 crack divisions of the nazi army had been defeated on the fields near Moscow, on the Volga, at Kursk bulge. The nazis still had some strength, but the joint strikes of the allies made the Third Reich crumple and disintegrate.

April 25, 1945.
Soviet and American troops shake hands on the Elbe.

François de Geoffre, the author of the book "Normandie-Niémen," in the cockpit of the Yak.

The command of the allied expeditionary corps in Europe discusses the plan for the Normandy landing. Left to right: Dwight Eisenhower, T. Lee-Mallory, Arthur Tedder, Bernard Montgomery. 1944.



A SOVIET WEEKLY
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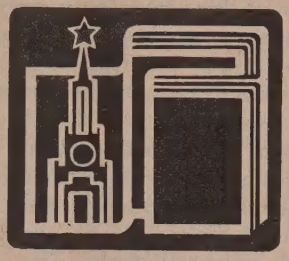

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

I am a Chilean who had to emigrate to the G.D.R. after the bloody Pinochet coup. This country has become a second home for my wife, myself and our six children. My wife and I joined the Communist Party of Chile a little over two years ago. Previously we had been members of a petty bourgeois radical party. Our decision was prompted by what we had seen in the socialist countries, in particular during our trip to the U.S.S.R.

HERNAN GARATE
Brandenburg, G.D.R.

The Soviet soccer coach Gennady Smirnov, who recently visited our country, made a very good contribution to football here. I must emphasize the importance of sporting and cultural visits; they can neutralize much of the propaganda and misinformation coming from Western countries. Please would those involved in decision-making consider a visit of your national rugby team. Rugby is New Zealand's national sport. In New Zealand, sport is definitely way in front of politics, for most persons' considerations. Such sports exchanges are likely to make a considerable impression here.

W.G. DYER
Palmerston North,
New Zealand

I am sure that the Soviet Union is ready to make serious compromises to prevent nuclear war. I set great store by this attitude. But you have another duty - to raise the torch of hope that guides us living in the West. It has been shining to us from the moment the world's first socialist state was founded.

ROBERTO BETTELLA
Padua, Italy

EDITORIAL

IT TAKES COURAGE NOT TO SHOOT

Revolutionary upheavals occur in various parts of the world, and revolutions must be able to defend themselves. This can involve recourse to arms. But popular government is not installed by force of arms, and the cult of violence is alien to genuine revolutionaries.

Today, political leaders are called upon to make humane decisions. The problem of the price of progress has never been as acute as it is now. The end no longer justifies the means, and sacrificing humans for "an idea," as in Dostoyevsky's novel, "The Possessed," is unacceptable.

The revolutionary governments in Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Nicaragua have embarked on courses of national reconciliation. The decisions to do so have not been prompted by military setbacks or the abandonment of programme of progressive reforms. The revolutions have not run out of steam, and nor are they going to backtrack to the old order.

Is national reconciliation, then, a tactical move? A pious tribute to the spirit of the age, which requires that all policies, revoluitionary policies included, acquire a human face? But the national reconciliation commissions set up in these countries are anything but token bodies. Their composition is representative. In Nicaragua, the commission includes Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, a prominent opponent of the Sandinistas. In Afghanistan, too, the commissions are anything but tame - the problems of reconciliation are the subject of arguments between members of the People's Democratic Party, the Moslem clergy and those who only recently were fighting against Kabul.

The aim of the dialogue initiated by these popular governments is not just to bring about a ceasefire. It is to look for a new formula for the development of revolutionary reforms. The problems facing the countries are so complex that they can only be resolved on the basis of national unity, together, by people who have abandoned the pursuit of power.

The only pass to the negotiation table is renunciation of military solutions to differences, and recognition of the ordinary norms and rules that maintain law and order in each state. Those who prefer to see other people die rather than give up their own dogmas are thereby placing themselves outside politics.

The road to reconciliation is arduous. It could be made easier if the international community firmly adhered to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of countries experiencing serious internal conflicts. Admittedly, it was not Stinger missiles that gave rise to feudal counterrevolution. But medievalism armed with Stingers has given the conflict a particularly ugly look.

The new approach to resolving internal disputes is prompted not only by a sense of reality, but also of responsibility for the fate of one's own and other nations. Disparate interests clash in the planet's trouble spots. Civil wars are therefore becoming increasingly easy to start and increasingly difficult to end. Conflicts escalate as internal arguments turn into regional ones. Where does this spiral lead to?

Unfortunately, the new global way of thinking has not germinated everywhere. It is hardly reasonable for the leader of a great power to double as a leader of rebels. It is hardly reasonable to insist on backing a political group which has murdered three million of its fellow citizens.

The choice made by the governments of Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Kampuchea is an act of political courage. In a world stuffed with weapons to give the order to shoot is much easier than to propose the rejection of violence as a means of settling political disputes.

THE GLORIOUS JUBILEE

TSERENPILYN BALKHAZHAV, secretary of Central Committee, Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party

At the start of the 20th century the Mongolian people was on the brink of extinction. Its unhappy fate seemed to have been decided. But the Great October Revolution, sweeping like a revolutionary storm over the planet, released the spiritual potential of millions of the oppressed and gave a future to my people.

We are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the socialist revolution in Russia. In the victorious month of October 1917 the people stormed the bastions of the past, led by rebel heroes inspired by the ideas of Lenin. They were very young, those titans who headed the revolution that changed the destiny of mankind. Many of the first Soviet government ministers were in their early 30s, while the oldest were about 40. 17-year-old military commanders defeated trained tsarist armies and invading troops in the Ukraine, Siberia, the Far East and here in Mongolia. The leader of our anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, Sukhe Bator, who in the wake of the Russian revolution led the Mongolian people in a liberation struggle, died at 29, a year before the Mongolian People's Republic was proclaimed.

In 1921 Mongolia embarked on the road of building socialism. Its achievements along that path were added proof of the significance of the Great October Revolution.

Our foes kept telling us that the capitalist stage of development was inevitable for a backward people seeking progress. We replied with Lenin: if the revolutionary proletariat comes to our assistance with all the means at its disposal, then backward countries, including Mongolia, could come to socialism bypassing the capitalist stage.

What has Mongolia achieved over the six and a half decades of people's government?

The republic has overcome its social, economic and cultural backwardness. The Mongolian people are successfully building socialism. The industrial sector of the economy is expanding in a former feudal country. The ideological, moral and spiritual unity of a once fragmented nomadic people is being consolidated. The country is adopting a socialist way of life, with its inherent guarantees for working people against poverty and unemployment.

The present stage in Mongolia's development is witnessing the complex interaction of social, scientific, technological and economic processes. The country is now trying to intensify production in every branch of the economy, and this calls for the wide-scale introduction of modern scientific and technological achievements and a dramatic rise in labour productivity.

Under the 8th five-year plan (1986-90) the national income is to rise by 28.8 per cent, industrial output by 33.7 per cent, and agricultural output by 20 per cent. Much of our investment will go into the development of the fuel and energy, mining, metalworking, food and building materials industries.

From the early days of the people's state in Mongolia, the Soviet Union has been its most reliable, loyal and unselfish ally. An honest friend, tested in misfortune and in joy, it has always been by our side. Without the aid of the U.S.S.R. and its support in all our affairs, Mongolia would not have achieved what it has.

We take a sober view of our achievements. I refer to outstanding problems, our omissions and shortcomings in the economic, social, political and cultural fields.

We must seriously improve the management of our economy and planning, and revise our criteria of quality and the effectiveness of social production to ensure the rational utilization of the potential we have created. We must eliminate shortcomings in the services and housing construction. We are determined to eradicate formalism, bureaucracy and inertia in various organizations.

We face the historic challenge of catching up with the level of development of the fraternal socialist countries.

Having taken a thorough look at the state of affairs in the country in terms of the prospects for national development, the 19th Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party launched a programme of social and economic restructuring. The experience of the revolutionary changes taking place in every area of life in the Soviet Union, and the processes of renewal in other socialist countries, the broad democracy and openness that are becoming the norm in the fraternal socialist countries - all this provides us with an example of a new approach to our own problems, a model of new thinking.

The Mongolian people see the development of their country in close association with the development of the international situation and the struggle for world peace. I believe the idea of disarmament, the Soviet Union's appeal to mankind to enter the coming century free of the burden of nuclear weapons to be the core of the new political thinking. People's Mongolia has tried to contribute to peace and security, both worldwide and in the Asian-Pacific region. I would like to hope that the consultative meeting of the representatives of Communist and Workers' parties of the Asian-Pasific countries in Ulan Bator in July has made a major contribution to the unity and cohesion of the forces of peace in Asia and towards their dialogue and cooperation.

Implementing our plans calls for intense thought and arduous and painstaking work. We have to attend to many urgent matters. So, in day-to-day work, we carry forward the ideas of the October Revolution.

We regard this glorious jubilee as part of the history of our own people, which has proclaimed communism its goal.

Ulan Bator

Mongolian scientists maintain close links with their Soviet counterparts, especially with their colleagues in the Siberian department of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Institute of Geology and Geophysics.

B e l o w: Novosibirsk. Corresponding Member of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and U.S.S.R. State Prize winner Gleb Polyakov advises Mongolian specialists.

TASS photo

Realities and illusions

The visit of Erich Honecker to the F.R.G.

The press has not hesitated to use the word "historic" in commenting on the official visit of Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Chairman of the Council of State. Indeed, it was the first visit of the G.D.R. leader to the F.R.G. since the foundation of the two German states 38 years ago.

Erich Honecker and Helmut Kohl before the start of negotiations in Bonn.

Photo from the newspaper Neues Deutschland (G.D.R.)

For the first twenty years Bonn denied the G.D.R.'s existence. The principles behind the policy of the first F.R.G. Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, consisted in the arrogating to himself "the sole representation (of all Germans), non-recognition of the G.D.R. and non-recognition of the border along the Oder-Neisse," to quote a biography published two years ago in the F.R.G. The Chancellor regarded the F.R.G. as "the bulwark against a communist invasion," and described the Potsdam agreements as "a nightmare." To a united, democratic Germany, Bonn preferred the restoration of capital, remilitarization and the integration of the F.R.G. into NATO. At the same time, the working people of the G.D.R. opted for a socialist course, and the German workers' and peasants' state became a strong link in the socialist community.

A constant source of tension in Europe, the policy of Adenauer and his successors in the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) disintegrated because it was based not on the recognition of realities but on illusions.

The Christian Democratic Union, along with its Bavarian "brother," the Christian Social Union, found itself in opposition in 1969, and the leader of the Social-Liberal coalition Willy Brandt, in his first government statement, pointed to the obvious fact that two German states exist on German soil. Following the treaties of Moscow and Warsaw, confirming the inviolability of frontiers, negotiations between Bonn and Berlin started. They resulted in the Treaty on the Bases of Relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, proceeding from the complete independence of both states in their internal and external affairs. Naturally, the Treaty contained elements of compromise. The F.R.G. was not prepared to recognize the status of the G.D.R. as a separate state. "Permanent missions," not embassies, were established on the banks of the Rhine and the Spree. In Bonn's opinion, this would serve to emphasize the "special character" of the relations between the two states, relations that up to now have been called "intra-German." There is even a special ministry in Bonn, the Ministry for Intra-German Relations. The G.D.R., as a matter of course, does not recognize the "special character" of these relations and does not deal with the above ministry. In its relations with the F.R.G., as with any other capitalist state, the Republic is guided by the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Why the visits were postponed

Back in December 1981, Erich Honecker was invited to visit the F.R.G. by its then Chancellor Helmut Schmidt during their meeting in the G.D.R. on Lake Werbellin. But in October of the following year, a new government took office in Bonn. The new Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, confirmed that the invitation stood, but the situation was for a long time unfavourable for a visit. The U.S. medium-range nuclear missiles started to be deloyed in the F.R.G., and the rapidly deteriorating international situation naturally told on relations between the two German states. True, the new Chancellor said that his government would honour the "Eastern Treaties," to whose conclusion the CDU/CSU bloc had so fiercely opposed. At the same time, however, official statements are still to be heard about the "temporary" character of these treaties, "the unity of the German nation," "the open German question" and even the continuing de jure existence of "the German Reich," burned out in the flames of World War II, along its 1937 frontiers.

But speeches to a chauvinistic audience and the realities of politics are a far cry from each other. Here one has to heed the real state of affairs. Meeting in March 1985 in Moscow, Honecker and Kohl confirmed in a joint statement that the non-violability of frontiers and respect for the territorial integrity of all states in Europe within their present borders are an essential condition for the preservation of peace.

And now at last the visit has taken place. It has happened at a time when Soviet initiatives are opening up a real opportunity to make the first step on the path to nuclear disarmament. And though the G.D.R. and the F.R.G. are not participating in the talks, the success or failure of the negotiations also depend to some extent on the stands taken by Bonn and Berlin. (It is opportune to recall the equivocal and inconsistent statements of the F.R.G. leaders with regard to the Pershing 1A missiles. As for the G.D.R., it unreservedly supports the concept of "the global double zero".) But in the general context of relations between East and West, those between the two German states play an important role. They can prove an extra point of tension, or, on the contrary, serve as a stabilizing factor.

Concrete results

What has been achieved by the visit?

First and foremost, it has confirmed the existence of the two German states. Erich Honecker was given a reception befitting his status as head of a foreign state. A guard of honour was formed for him, the national anthem of the G.D.R. was played and the flag of the German socialist state flew at the Federal Chancery. But even this ceremony aroused the resentment of those who cannot relinquish "cold war" dogmas. These include not only the eternal have beens who frequent the pubs but also some CDU/CSU deputies. It is rumoured that there was friction in the

"Christian" faction of the Bundestag over the question of protocol. Some were not prepared to accept the idea of the Bundeswehr band playing the G.D.R. national anthem. But they had to....

The joint commuiniqué reflecting the results of the talks emphasizes respect for the independence of each state. Both sides share the view that the G.D.R. and the F.R.G., conscious of the responsibility imposed on them by history, should make special efforts to ensure peaceful coexistence in Europe. Germany must never again be the cause of war.

Central to the negotiations between the two leaders were the problems of disarmament, and this was reflected in the communiqué. Both sides proclaimed their intention to facilitate the achievement of concrete results at the current talks in Geneva and Vienna, as well as promoting the bilateral negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. They stressed that the overall dismantling of Soviet and American medium-range missiles will substantially enhance stability and security in Europe and Asia. Both leaders spoke in favour of an early agreement on a ban on nuclear testing, and expressed the desire to facilitate an early agreement on a universal ban on chemical weapons.

Concrete results have been achieved in the area of bilateral cooperation. The leaders signed three agreements: one on environmental protection, one on exchange of information and know-how in the field of protection from radiation, and one on cooperation in science and technology. The sides spelled out their intention to develop economic relations, extend cultural exchanges, and promote tourism. It is clear that substantial results have been achieved.

There was, however, evidence of differences on many important issues, including some disarmament problems. Erich Honecker reiterated Berlin's Prague-supported proposal to create a zone free from chemical weapons and a non-nuclear corridor in Central Europe. Moreover, it would be a concrete rather than a merely declarative contribution by the two German states to the cause of disarmament. Unfortunately, Bonn continues to take a negative stand. Their position is illogical in that some members of the coalition like to dwell on the "special" vulnerability of the F.R.G. to the threat of atomic and chemical weapons, which would be all the greater were the Pershings to be scrapped.

"Not on the agenda"

Fundamental differences remain in what the communiqué called the "national question." Speaking at the reception in his honour, Erich Honecker stressed that the only point of departure for a constructive policy can be the fact of the existence of two mutually independent German states with different political systems and belonging to different blocs. The question of German integrity was no longe relevant because, in Honecker's words, socialism and capitalism are as incompatible as fire and water. Helmut Kohl, however, spoke again of "ending division of Germany" as the aim of the F.R.G.'s policy. It is strikingly evident that this "aim" runs counter to the intention expressed in the communiqué to develop relations with the G.D.R. as a sovereign state. However, Helmut Kohl noted in this connection that "the solution of the German question is not at present on the agenda of world history."

I believe that this reservation was made in large measure to allay the fears of the F.R.G.'s Western neighbours. On the eve of Erich Honecker's visit some observers in countries that are the F.R.G.'s allies asked if the visit might not be a first step towards the unification of Germany. The question, of course, ignores the principled stand of the German Democratic Republic and can be regarded as unfounded. But it reflects the fears of the F.R.G.'s Western neighbours provoked by the irresponsible statements of many Bonn politicians about the "open" German question.

One newspaper recently quoted a statement, unique in its perception, by historian Adolf Heeren soon after the Vienna Congress of 1815 (!): "To tell the truth, foreign powers are by no means indifferent to what system a central European state has. The emergence of a sovereign and absolute monarchy in Germany would soon result in the end of freedom in Europe." Alas, this prediction was fulfilled with a vengeance in the last and this century. Sovereign Germany, ruled by the Junkers, monopolists and the military, where extreme nationalism was elevated to the level of a state ideology, has caused incalculable suffering and misery to close and distant neighbours. It is not surprising that a Germany unified along the lines envisaged by Bonn is perceived by its neighbours as a nightmare vision.

In their speeches Chancellor Kohl and the other officials who received the high-ranking guest repeatedly expressed their displeasure at the way the German Democratic Republic guards its frontiers. (This is, of course, its sovereign right). Demands were voiced to make the border "passable," and "demolish the wall." The local mass media tried to suggest that this topic dominated the negotiations. At the same time, the Bonn votaries of "open frontiers" did not whisper a word about how things stood prior to 1961. Then the border between the G.D.R. and West Berlin was indeed open. The F.R.G. did not conceal its policy of bleeding the G.D.R. white and undermining the socialist system. The closing of the border frustrated these schemes, cooled hot heads in the West, and compelled many people to take a sober look at the real state of affairs. If there had been no reliably protected frontier, the agreements that underpin European détente would never have been reached.

This does not of course mean that the G.D.R. regards the strict frontier regime between the G.D.R. and the F.R.G. as ideal, but it does reflect the character of relations between the countries. Were these to change for the better the frontier would change too. During the visit Erich Honecker put this way: "I think if we work jointly in accordance with the communiqué adopted in Bonn and achieve peaceful cooperation, a day will come when the frontier will not separate but unite us like the frontier between the G.D.R. and the Polish People's Republic."

This statement caused considerable speculation and conjecture here. I would advise those who indulged themselves in this way to stop to think of what Honecker in fact said. The frontier between the G.D.R. and Poland is an internationally recognized frontier between sovereign states. Neither has any territorial claim to the other, and even less so is either going to absorb the other or interfere in the other's internal affairs. Unfortunately, there is still a long way to go to achieve these conditions in relations between the G.D.R. and the F.R.G.

It is known that as early as 1980 Berlin suggested to Bonn that the sovereignty of the G.D.R. be discussed and the diplomatic missions between the G.D.R. and the F.R.G. upgraded to ambassadorial level. Berlin also proposed that the department in West German Salzgitter "registration centre" that deals with the "supervision" of the activities of G.D.R. citizens and bodies be closed, the work on the demarcation of the borders between the states be brought to completion.

At the time Bonn refused to discuss the matter. Judging from the documents made public, these questions, barring the demarcation issue, were not discussed during the visit. Not, of course, because the F.R.G. withdrew them from the agenda, but because it is still unprepared for a solution to them. Bonn is trying to preserve the attributes and institutions that sustain the illusion that the German question remains open. But illusions cannot be relied on. Progress is only possible on the basis of recognizing the realities. And Erich Honecker's visit has given fresh confirmation of this.

ALEXANDER TOLPEGIN
our own correspondent
Bonn

ETHIOPIA

Shengo assumes power

●THE SHENGO, OR "GREAT ASSEMBLY," IS NOW THE NAME OF THE SUPREME BODY OF GOVERNMENT IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA - THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY A CONSTITUENT SESSION OF WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN ADDIS ABABA.

The deputies to the Assembly, chosen by secret ballot in general direct elections, have adopted decisions that have tremendous importance for the further political development of this ancient country.

In his speech at the Shengo session, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, Mengistu Haile Mariam, emphasized that the major objective of the new stage in the revolutionary development of the country is the transfer of state power to the hands of the Ethiopian people.

The Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has entered into force. Its first article expresses the essence of the new system of government: "The People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a state of the working people based on the union of workers and peasants in cooperation with the intelligentsia, the revolutionary army, craftsmen and other democratic strata of the population."

The Constitution acknowledged the principles of democracy for the sake of which an anti-feudal revolution took place 13 years ago in Ethiopia. "Power in the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia shall belong to the people" (Article 3, Item 1).

The Constitution defines the role of the revolutionary party:

"1. The Workers' Party of Ethiopia, guided by Marxism-Leninism, is a vanguard political party whose ultimate objective is to serve the working people and work to ensure their interests.

2. The Workers' Party of Ethiopia determines the guidelines for the development of the country, and is the leading force of the state and the whole society" (Article 6).

The Constitution envisages the following: "The direction in which the political system of Ethiopian society is to develop is that of further accelerating the process of laying the foundation for the building of the socialist system through the growing participation of the working people in the management of the affairs of the state and the solution of the cardinal problems facing society,perfecting the structure and work of government bodies, increasing working people's control, enhancing the role of mass organizations, and developing the legal basis of the government and public activities" (Article 8).

The Constitution also formulates the basic principles of social relations. "Labour," it says, "is a reputable source of the wealth and prosperity of society. The social status of the individual is determined by the results of his work" (Article 18).

The session of the Shengo has elected the ruling bodies of the republic for a term of five years: the President and Vice-President, and the members of the State Council. The first President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairman of the State Council is Mengistu Haile Mariam, 46, leader of the Ethiopian revolution. Fisseha Desta was elected Vice-President of the republic, and Fikre-Selassie Wogderess, Chairman of the Council of Ministers (both members of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia).

The session also elected members of the Supreme Court, deputies of the prime minister, approved the new national anthem and the national emblem of the People's Republic of Ethiopia, and defined the national holiday - Republic Day - which will be celebrated on September 12, the anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution.

Among the foreign guests present at the session was a Soviet Party and government delegation headed by Lev Zaikov, member of the Political Bureau and secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In the message from the Soviet Party and government leadership the proclamation of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was described as a historic event in the life of the friendly African state.

ALEXEI BUKALOV

FINLAND

New election rules

●A NEW ELECTORAL SYSTEM WILL ENTER INTO FORCE ON JANUARY 31 NEXT YEAR, THE DATE FOR THE SCHEDULED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND.

A special feature of the new electoral system is direct voting by the population. Previously the Finns voted for a 301-strong electoral college which subsequently named the president. Now each voter ballots directly for one of the contestants, or at his or her personal discretion, for a member of the electoral college. If any candidate polls over 50 per cent of the votes, the electoral college is not convened. Otherwise, on February 15, the college will decide who is to be president. As yet, Mauno Koivisto leads the public opinion polls, steadily gaining the support of about half of those polled.

The nomination campaign was rather unusual for Finland. Five months before the presidential election, the political situation began to clear up. And though the line has not yet been drawn, there are really five candidates running for president. These are the present incumbent Mauno Koivisto, Prime Minister Harri Holkeri, Chairman of the Centre Party Paavo Väyrynen, Governor Kalevi Kivistö and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Finland, Youko Kajanoja.

Mauno Koivisto is the candidate of the Social Democratic Party and the Rural Party. He enjoys the support of some factions and members of the Swedish People's Party and the Liberal People's Party. A large percentage of the Green movement and other public organizations intend to vote for him. Thus, the present incumbent is the only candidate who has supporters on either side of the political centre.

What about the other candidates? Holkeri, the candidate of the National Coalition Party, and Väyrynen, nominated by the Centre Party, have always won support beyond the ranks of their parties. But neither of these candidates are likely to poll an overall majority of votes, in spite of their personal popularity.

Kalevi Kivistö, who represents the Finnish People's Democratic League, enjoys the support of the Communist Party of Finland, some left-wing Socialists and the Greens, and is also popular with the intelligentsia. Another candidate, Youko Kajanoja, has been nominated by the electoral bloc known as the Democratic Alternative, comprising a considerable proportion of the left.

Both Kivistö and Kajanoja find their support among left-wing voters who this time have no common candidate.

The four candidates will have primarily to contend against each other as none of them can compete with Mauno Koivisto.

The impression is that the forthcoming election will be a kind of prelude to the presidential election in 1994 when Mauno Koivisto is unlikely to run. The politicians and the parties are already preparing for the next round in the power struggle.

ALEXANDER POLYUKHOV
our own correspondent

Stockholm

CANADA

French-speaking nations meet

"Why did the Soviets open so many windows at once! I'm freezing in the draught."
Cartoon by Vsevolod Arsenyev

●THE SECOND MEETING OF THE LEADERS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING STATES HAS BEEN HELD IN QUEBEC.

The heads of state and government of 38 countries discussed economic problems, regional conflicts and the position of Francophone culture in the world. Their organization, modelled on the British Commonwealth, was founded some 18 months ago. The idea was first suggested back in the 1960s, when France wanted to unite its former colonial possessions on the basis of a common language in order to be able to influence their policies. At the time, the project failed to get off the ground.

In the movement as it exists now, France has to deal with equal partners pursuing an independent policy. Not surprisingly, the first question to which the Quebec meeting addressed itself was the low level of development in African countries and their growing foreign indebtedness. In 1985 the debts of Francophone African countries amounted to 57.4 billion dollars. Although the meeting was attended by 25 African states, its resolution on economic problems had nothing new to offer. The only practical measure was proposed by the hosts to the meeting when the Canadian government decided to write off 246 million dollars from the debt of seven African Francophone countries. The decision, however, has yet to be ratified by the Canadian parliament.

The meeting called for the recognition of the Palestinian Arab people's right to self-determination. They demanded an end to hostilities between Iran and Iraq, normalization of the situation in the Persian Gulf, and assistance to Lebanon in restoring schools and hospitals, and government and cultural offices. They proposed an immediate international conference on the Middle East. They also adopted a resolution on the situation in southern Africa, which reads, in part, that "the government of South Africa must make a clear statement renouncing the policy of apartheid, end the state of emergency, release all political prisoners (including Nelson Mandela), and recognize the legitimacy of the African National Congress and other anti-apartheid political organizations."

The lion's share of the time was given over to discussing ways of strengthening Francophone culture. Most speakers voiced concern about the fate of the French language in the face of the onslaught of Anglo-Saxon traditions and the growing U.S. domination in the field of culture and information. This problem was mentioned in a special message to the participants from U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar.

To protect the French language, the meeting decided to set up an international French-speaking television agency for the exchange of programmes and to expand the range of the Francophone television satellite network (at present it covers only Europe) to include North America, the Caribbean countries and, eventually, the whole of Africa. In 1986-87, 46 million dollars were spent on promoting Francophone culture. The meeting decided to double that figure in 1988.

SERGEI SVISTUNOV

CHAD-LIBYA

Five-dimensional conflict

●ON SEPTEMBER 9, PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA OF ZAMBIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, CALLED ON CHAD AND LIBYA TO STOP HOSTILITIES. BOTH SIDES HAVE RESPONDED TO THE CALL.

Kenneth Kaunda's appeal signalled the OAU's intention to act as an honest broker. The move was preceded by a dangerous aggravation of the situation on the Chad-Libya border.

Civil war in Chad between the forces of Hissene Habre and the Libyan-backed Transitional Government of National Unity had erupted into a conflict between Chad and Libya. Hissene Habre had become de factor President of Chad. Having established control over the country's territory, he engaged Libya in hostilities over the disputed Aouzou Strip in the border area between the two neighbouring states (see issue No. 34, 1987). According to some sources, the strip is rich in valuable minerals.

Recent weeks have witnessed a seesaw battle in the area. In early August Chad took over the disputed territory. On August 29 Libya recaptured it. On September 5 N'Djamena troops launched an offensive. They seized the Aouzou Strip, and hostilities spilled over into Libyan territory. France-Presse reported that Chadian troops had captured Maaten-es-Sarra in Libya, inflicting heavy damage. Libyan air raids on southern Chad have also been reported. One Libyan plane was shot down by French troops near N'Djamena.

The need for the Organization of African Unity to assume a mediatory role is long overdue as the conflict is inter-African in character. Of late, however, interference by forces alien to the interests of independent Africa has markedly increased. France is not only the main supplier of arms to N'Djamena. It maintains a 1,500-strong military contingent in Chad, which is from time to time involved in hostilities against Libyans. The role of the U.S. has also noticeably increased. The newspaper The Washington Post reports that this year Washington has allocated an additional 32 million dollars in military aid to Chad. This includes the cost of Redeye missiles. The possibility of supplying Chad with Stinger missiles is being considered.

There has been no dearth of peaceful statements from France. Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond has declared that France "was not behind the Chadian army's intervention in Libya." It may be true that France is afraid of becoming embroiled in a war against Libya, but it is possible that it is just trying to improve its image by talking peace in the face of U.S. competition. The Chadian Ambassador to Paris, Ahmed Allam-Mi said recently that France was behaving "like a jealous man who is afraid Chad will change wives."

As for the United States, its interference in the conflict, which has so far taken the form of arms supplies, is prompted by the desire to strike Libya from the south after the failure of attempts to intimidate it with air raids from the north.

It is hard to say how successful the OAU's mediation will be. One thing is clear: there is no other way towards settlement. And there is no better mediator.

DMITRY ZGERSKY

The disputed Aouzou Strip.

Photo from L'Express (France)

BRITAIN

Lack of unity

●THE 119th CONFERENCE OF THE BRITISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS HAS REVEALED SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY'S LABOUR MOVEMENT.

There were bitter debates over agreements with employers that could put an end to strike action. One such agreement has already been signed by the British Electrical Trades Union. A large section of delegates to the conference, headed by National Union of Mineworkers' leader Arthur Scargill, rightly saw this as a shameful concession by the British working class, and called for an immediate end to such practices. The majority, however, voted to postpone the debate for a year. It was only with difficulty that the left managed to secure the adoption of a resolution supporting Labour's commitment to non-nuclear defence.

The constant arguments over basic issues reflect the present state of affairs in the British working class movement. The third successive Conservative government is making an onslaught on the rights of working people. Since the Tories came to power in 1979, unemployment and the number of Britons living below the official poverty line have almost doubled. The country has a quarter of a million homeless people and entire regions (the North and Northeast) are becoming industrial deserts. One might have thought that all this would unite the workers in opposition to the capitalist class.

However, working-class unity is a rare commodity. There are many reasons for this. One is the skilful way in which the Conservatives are splitting the trade union movement.

In eight years, the number of shareholders in the country has increased almost three-fold to 9 million people. Many of these are working class. The Tories have adopted the tactic of the short working day, which now affects a third of the workforce. These workers have been deprived of normal trade union rights, including the right to strike. Conservative policy has reduced trade union membership from 12 to 9.5 million. According to the French newspaper Le Monde, only one per cent of Britons (as against two thirds in 1979) regard the TUC as the main opposition force.

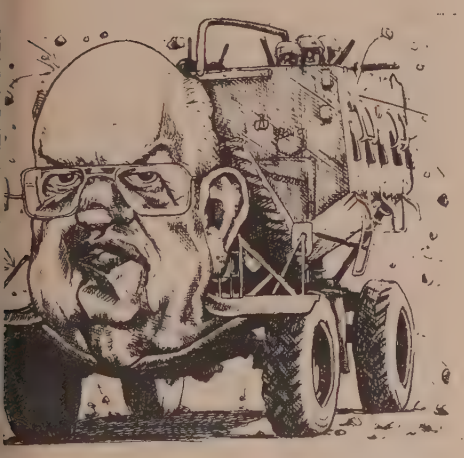
YURI KUDIMOV

Botha repeats Ian Smith's mistakes

I recently talked to a South African, a serious young man with very sober ideas about the present stage in South Africa's political development. I asked him why President Botha was constantly tightening the screws instead of being realistic and embarking on long overdue radical reforms.

In reply he pointed out two things. First, the government believes that the imposition of the state of emergency in the summer of last year justified itself: unrest in the black townships quietened and the police and the army were in control of the situation. Second, Botha had to heed the ultra-right, whose influence increased dramatically after the May elections to the white chamber of Parliament. If he went too far the threat from the right would become a reality.

It struck me that this was an explanation



Drawing from the Economist (Britain)

the regime would find very convenient. It could constantly ascribe its crimes to the "ultras," and simultaneously create an illusion of change and pose before the public as "enlightened reformers." In racist society the meaning of many notions is so distorted that even Botha's men are considered to be liberals, said South African authoress Nadine Gordimer.

But are the contradictions between the government and ultra-right really so great? And are their views of the present situation in South Africa really very different? Look at the people who are closest allies of the reformers. They include Eugene Terre Blanche, leader of a pro-fascist party with whom even those who are to the right of Botha in the white political arena refuse to deal. In mid-August, welcoming another of the President's bellicose speeches, Terre Blanche sent him a cable in which he declared that the Afrikaner Resistance Movement he led was the most powerful ally of the government in the struggle against the African National Congress (ANC) and the Communists.

It should be said that while Botha's policy is gaining plaudits from the right, it is still a creation of the ruling Nationalist Party. The new constitution of South Africa adopted on September 3, 1984, legitimized the rightlessness of more than 25 million-strong black population and two days later Botha became president with almost dictatorial powers. Ever since, his repressive measures have as a rule been one jump ahead of the demands of the extremists. It was Botha who gave the order to shoot down the peaceful demonstrations in black townships, it was he who banned the funerals of the victims of police terror, and he who signed the decree introducing the state of emergency. Without prompting from the right ,the President has been harping on the tune that the whites will remain in the driving seat under any future settlement in South Africa. It is he and his "team" who muzzled the mass media, which have been forbidden to report honestly on the situation in the country. The tragic toll of the past three years is more than 2,500 dead and about 30,000 people arrested.

Apparently the President did not consult with Terre Blanche when he accused a group of prominent Afrikaners of treason for defying the authorities and meeting a delegation of the ANC in Dakar. Late in August he launched further measures against anti-aparthied campaigners: those South Africans who were "collaborating with the enemy" (Botha's name for the liberation organizations) would have restricted opportunities to go abroad; simultaneously an inquiry is to start into the activity of extra-parliamentary groups that condemn aparthied.

Pretoria's actions are shortsighted. Everything that has happened in South Africa up to now was just a trial of strength. Only warning shots have been fired. Calm in cities patrolled by army and police day and night is unlikely to deceive anyone. The srike by almost 300,000 black miners last August revealed the powerful militant potential of the African working class of which many in Pretoria were unaware. Containing this formidable new force would be much be more difficult then the riots of school students. The miners' strike highlighted the fact that time is running out for Mr Botha. The struggle against aparthied is entering a new phase as the political consciousness of the masses grows and the blows against the regime begin to connect. One can subscribe to the words of Andre Hamersma, an economist from Johannesburg, who said that the situation is not "viewed as a catastrophic event at this stage," with the emphasis on the last phrase.

But how long will the reprieve last and whom does it depend on? As regards the black majority, it is ready for equal negotiations. It is fair to say that Africans have already gone their part of the way by presenting a blueprint for immediate measures. They include ending the state of emergency, releasing political prisoners and lifting the ban on political parties. The leaders who can speak on behalf of the people have been named. First on the list is Nelson Mandela, who is serving a life sentence.

But Pretoria will not hear of the ANC as a partner in negotiations, and brushes off all demands that impinge on the power and privileges of the whites. Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, a noted leader of the South African opposition, described the behavior of the ruling elite as "almost a carbon copy of the Rhodesian experience, with whites enveloping themselves in a cocoon of disinformation and losing touch with the broader society." Pretoria is unlikely to welcome the comparison with the fallen Smith regime, but the comparison is apt. As in Rhodesia the racist minority in South Africa refuses to understand that a policy based on reprisals will not only fail to preserve white power and white privileges but is bringing the situation closer to the dangerous line beyond which destruction and bloodshed could ensue.

It should be recalled that resistance to change in Rhodesia lasted for 14 years and cost 28,000 lives. The price South Africans will have to pay for the Botha government's senseless policies could be much higher.

BORIS ASOYAN

There is much to be changed by the third millennium

Hungarian Academician MIHALY SIMAI discusses problems of development of the socialist economy

Before my departure for Budapest, my friends who are experts on international economics, told me as if they had agreed in advance, that a meeting with Academician Simai was a must. Besides being a very charming man, they said, he was a specialist in world economics with broad-minded and original views and considerable experience of work in the United Nations. Mihaly Simai has written definitive studies on the international movement of capital, the world capitalist market and trends in economic development in conditions of the scientific and technological revolution. His field of interest also includes questions of socialist economic planning. In the Soviet Union he is best known for his book,"Towards the Third Millenium," put out by Progress Publishers in 1977, in which he analyzes the trends in the world economy at the close of the 20th century. Our conversation centred on urgent problems in the social and economic development of world socialism as a part of the world economy.

N.T. The social and economic restructuring now in progress in the Soviet Union is an imperative of the times we live in. But in the scientific analysis of these radical changes, the social sciences and, in particular, economic theory, are lagging behind the times. The logic of the development of the productive forces and production relations under socialism is now posing a number of problems which are being resolved in practice faster than in theory. It is becoming obvious, for instance, that as socialism uses the same means of production as capitalism, it is possible to make certain forms of economic organization that are more typical of the system of so-called free enterprise work for the new society.

Simai. We discussed this interesting question many years ago. The crux of the matter is that new technologies demand certain forms of production organization, be they capitalist or socialist, as without them productive forces cannot develop. For example, if you use robots you should not automate only a part of the production process, as often happens in our countries. You have to automate the entire process. Neither is it possible to retain the former level of employment at a plant that is being robotized. On the other hand, preservation of employment is a very important task for a socialist society. Yet, along with the modernization of technology, it is imperative simultaneously to change the composition and structure of the work force.

This is one aspect of the question. The other is in the special role of information. The new forms of organizing production imply first of all a constant flow of information. And one part of it cannot be classified information and the other non-classified. There are people who have no access to information and people who have but do not know how to use it. Such a system cannot be retained while using new technologies as these require new production relations and the free exchange of information.

An even more complex problem is to be found in the sphere of microeconomy, that is at the level of enterprises. It is created by the need for a flexible production organization not on the basis of a uniform technology at a single plant but by way of co-production involving various enterprises. No less important are direct links between manufacturers and consumers. Such direct links are developing within the framework of a very complex system in which requirements and possibilities of satisfying them depend on specific decisions at various levels, as it is simply impossible to plan everything.

But, as distinct from capitalist society, under socialism it is necessary both to foresee and plan the development of such links. One must be aware of their influence on social processes in order to avoid adverse consequences. The so-called free play of market forces cannot satisfy the needs of a developing socialist society. Hence the need for the skill to combine central planning with flexibility in the market. It is very important to organize planning in such a way as to permit the development of direct links in the microeconomy.

In Hungary we have made a fairly detailed study of the question of how market relations can develop in a socialist society. But like you we have not yet worked out optimal forms for macroeconomic planning and management, that is on a national scale in the new conditions.

Yet these forms play no less a role than the market. That is why we cannot yet flexibly regulate the macroeconomy. And we still have a lot to learn in this field. Lenin wrote that in the monopoly one can discern the embryo of socialism because it represents a new stage in the socialization of production. So it is extremely important for us to study the laws of development of socialized production, and understand in what ways it should be changed to make it serve social progress.

N.T. Social forecasting can play a special role in the flexible combination of macroeconomic planning with the development of direct links in the microeconomy, where the independence of enterprises is guaranteed. Social forecasting can indicate strategic directions for economic development in the interests of society and its different strata.

Simai. Economic activity is only one type of social activity, even though the volume and nature of the distribution of material and other boons depend on it. In other words, economic and other social processes are interconnected and cannot be taken in isolation. Under socialism their interconnection should be closer than under capitalism. For it is no secret that the political and social aspects of society's development are more important to us than the purely economic ones.

But if the organization of society and the approach to political and social problems ignore their close interconnection, this leads to arbitrary practice. And it inevitably affects economic processes as well because it comes into conflict with the logic of social development. And in the event of such a conflict the economy can no longer serve society.

Generally speaking, the influence of macroeconomic decisions on the development of society has not so far been very clear either in the socialist or the capitalist systems. Neither is our leadership's perception of it sufficiently clear.

Very often there is an oversimplified perception of the impact of macroeconomic decisions on enterprises. Some senior economic managers even think the macroeconomy is like a big enterprise and that it can be run accordingly. But the national economy is much more complex than an enterprise. Political decisions can help enterprises in their work but they can also be an impediment. But at the macroeconomic level their impact is much greater because of the close interaction between the economic, political and social factors we have already mentioned.

We must learn three important things. The first is forecasting, not of development, but of problems that could arise in the economy and social life in their close interaction. This is particularly necessary

to avoid crises. The second is planning. What do we want to achieve, what are our main priorities? How can we achieve them and under what conditions? How can we create these conditions and what interrelationships will result from them in various branches of the economy? Such questions should be posed by planning prior to starting to formulate in practice the macroeconomic policy that is to be the core of economic and social development. The third is the choice of methods of regulating economic development, the use of various socio-economic levers by means of which the aims set can be achieved.

N.T. It appears that structural policy is the key direction of marcoeconomic planning. Some Hungarian economists are of the opinion that your economy did not adjust in time to the requirements of the world economy and that that was why the structure of industry was not changed. At the same time, your domestic market is saturated with consumer goods. The service industry, too, is developing rapidly. Are you approaching the level of, say, West European countries, in terms of the ratio between employment in material production and in the services?

Simai. We are still a long way behind them. The services can develop rapidly only if there is a high level of labour productivity in industry. If it is not high enough, it is difficult to expand even privately provided services. For employment in this sphere can increase only when it falls off in the branches of material production. Another reason why the services in my country are not yet sufficiently developed is that we have paid little attention to the problem. There was even a time when we dismissed this on ideological grounds. The services were considered non-productive. And now our society cannot satisfy all the requirements of the population or allocate sufficient funds for the rapid expansion of services. Their inadequate development has become one of our most important structural problems.

N.T. Direct links between enterprises are now becoming a key trend in intensified cooperation between CMEA countries. Logic suggests that this should produce a situation in which the national levels of labour productivity, production costs and, with them, prices in the European CMEA countries are brought closer together. Integration will also facilitate the expansion of producer coproduction and scientific-technical exchanges. In combination with the coordination of national economic plans and the external economic policy, this could lead to the formation of a common socialist market. In other words, integration will reach a qualitatively new level.

Simai. I do not look that far into the future. As I see it, our main problem today is intensifying cooperation. And particularly the ability to take into account the interests of different countries. These interests are varied and sometimes lie on different planes. The G.D.R., for instance, has a special interest in trade with the F.R.G. Poland and Czechoslovakia also have their own special interests. We have now realized that it is impossible to coordinate interests in our economic system on the inter-state level alone. This means that we must start to coordinate, to learn to take into consideration mutual interests on the microeconomic level, that is, to integrate the interests of enterprises.

So far the CMEA's economic mechanism has operated mostly on the basis of bilateral cooperation, particuarly between the Soviet Union and the other countries. And this is not integration in the full meaning of the word. A process of disintegration, even, has begun in recent years. And now it is necessary to do everything to invigorate cooperation between enterprises in different CMEA countries. Without this we will not create a common market.

It is undeniable that the transition to direct links between enterprises gives rise to new questions. For instance, the question of how control over their activity, or the work of the joint enterprises created by them, will be organized. Or how to assess prices: in accordance with the level in the U.S.S.R., where prices of raw materials are very low or, say, Hungary, where they are very high. For it may turn out that products whose output is effective in the U.S.S.R. will not be competitive in Hungary. In short, we will still have to solve many problems. And we are only beginning to do so.

N.T. We began our conversation with the remark that it is now necessary to rethink many theoretical propositions. Some ten to fifteen years ago Soviet economists wrote in New Times as well as elsewhere that the main advantage of socialist integration is that it draws countries closer together on the macroeconomic level.

Simai. And I also wrote this. There are two forms of integration: by way of the market and by way of the plan. Integration by way of the plan is quite possible. But along this road we have made quite a few mistakes, although we had a real posssibility of achieving such integration because at the time the level of industrial development in the East European countries was relatively low.

For if at that time our cooperation had been sufficiently thorough, and had our economic interests coincided, we could well have applied macroeconomic forms of integration on that basis. But we lost time, and now the industrial structures of individual CMEA countries do not always correlate. So-called technological nationalism has become an impediment to integration.

N.T. But at that time these mistakes were inevitable because of the low level of industrial development. The economies of all the CMEA countries were developing extensively according to the principle the more the better. And nobody thought about the possibility of structural disproportions because each country was experiencing shortages of the most essential things. Neither was the question of intensifying production on the basis of new technologies as urgent as it is now. Alas, according to some economists we were twenty years late in switching to the intensive course of development.

Simai. The trouble is that we are more than twenty years late. Because qualitative changes in technology have taken place over the past twenty years. And they have turned out to be more significant than those during the first two postwar decades. And this means that our present technological lag behind the West is even greater than then. Even when I was beginning work on my book, "Towards the Third Millenium," early in the 1970s, it was not as substantial as in the second half of the 1980s. That is why the accelerated development of science and new technologies and their fullest possible use in industry is now the main strategic objective of the socialist countries.

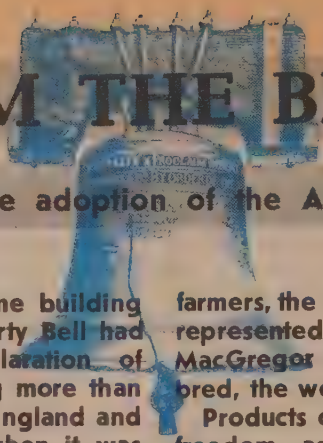
There is, however, a very important field in which the dynamics of the development of new technologies was high. I refer to the defence industry. Some Western authorities view it as a field in which the Soviet Union has competed with the West as an equal. For this reason your country now has greater possibilities of drawing on this technological reserve than the smaller socialist countries, given of course that the military-political situation permits this.

N.T. Do you think we will manage to catch up technologically by the beginning of the third millenium?

Simai. In the optimum case we will need eight to ten years for this, not less. For we will have to change the education system and retrain personnel so that they will be able to utilize the new technologies. The structure of industry and its organization should be different too. But the main thing is to increase people's technical knowledge and teach them to apply their new skills effectively. All these are far from simple tasks. The restructuring that has been started may solve them. If it turns out to be a success in political terms, then all the other objectives of socio-economic acceleration will be achieved more quickly too.

Interviewer: **FELIX GORYUNOV**
our special correspondent
Budapest-Moscow

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS



200 years after the adoption of the American Constitution

They met in the same city and the same building where barely ten years earlier the Liberty Bell had announced the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The giant bell, weighing more than a ton, was unlucky. It had been cast in England and had hardly arrived on American soil when it was dropped. Urgent repairs had to be made to enable the bell to perform its legendary mission. But the crack remained....

They met for their Convention in Philadelphia at a difficult time: the country was rent by economic problems, discontent was rife among the small farmers, and confusion reigned in the legislation of the states. A document was needed to give legal force to the outcome of the American Revolution.

They met to frame the first written constitution in history, the most progressive for its time.

Products of their age, they wanted to order the destiny of the country. The 55 representatives from nearly all of the original American states were big landowners, successful lawyers and statesmen - most of them veterans of the War of Independence. The rest of the population - the poor, the debt-ridden farmers, the women, the Indians, the blacks - were not represented. It was, as the American historian James MacGregor Burns put it, the convention of the well-bred, the well-fed, the well-read, and the well-wed.

Products of their time, the founding fathers prized freedom, as they understood it, above all else. Freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly. Freedom to own property. They considered the freedom of ownership to be the main of all freedoms. And there were some among them who already then saw in this the basic contradiction of their future society. From the very outset a barely discernible flaw marred the historic document.

They wanted to safeguard their Freedom from the "price of democracy," as they described the revolts of the poor. Which was why a few years later they incorporated in the Constitution the first 10 amendments - the Bill of Rights.

They understood Freedom as freedom for themselves. And some of them sincerely believed that they were expressing the interests of all.

On September 17, 1787, the Constitution of the United States was born.

No amendment on peace

VLADIMIR PUSTOGAROV, D. Sc. (Law)

"We the people of the United States..." The very first words of the Constitution were a challenge to the absolute monarchies which dominated the world at that time. The Bastille had yet to fall. The Great French Revolution of 1789 which ushered in a new epoch in history was approaching. The democratic principles - such as the division of power into the legislative, executive and judicial branches - which were written into the fundamental law of the American Republic, reflected the changes that were imminent. The Americans are rightly proud of the history of the establishment of their state. The events of those years are recorded in history textbooks in the Soviet Union as well.

However, the noisy campaign mounted in the U.S. around the bicentenary celebrations is viewed by this writer with mixed feelings. And not even because of the techniques used to "sell" the jubilee within the country and beyond its borders. High-pressure salesmanship has long been a hallmark of the American way of life.

The Congress shall have the power:...to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water.

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8 (11)

What gives one food for thought is the obvious striving to present the document adopted two centuries ago and in force to this day as a model for universal emulation, as a world standard of constitutional law. The venerable age of the document is invoked as evidence of its merit: it was framed 200 years ago but it still ensures the prosperity of the United States, they say. Such arguments are to be found not only in publicity handouts but also in the writings of American lawyers. The January issue of the journal America which is published in the Russian language, for instance, carried the first of a series of articles by Virginia University professor Howard devoted to the jubilee. Outlining the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, the professor stresses that the fundamental law of the United States, the "patriarch" of modern constitutions, is still valid today, when technology has reached the point that makes it possible to send man into outer space and to the Moon, and the American government "is performing functions such as the framers of the Constitution could never have imagined." In the professor's opinion, the Constitution "reflects what are considered the key values of a free society," and these values are of "universal significance."

I heard the same view expressed in a Voice of America broadcast by Robert Goldwin, who heads the constitution programme at the American Enterprise Institute. He told listeners that the principles of the U.S. Constitution were "formulated for all humanity."

As one who specializes in international law I am naturally interested in the

internationai aspects of constitutional law. After World War II many countries incorporated in their fundamental laws provisions relating to foreign policy and commitments to the world community. The main purpose of constitutional provisions is, as before, to consolidate the social and economic system of a given state. At the same time, the growing interdependence of the modern world, the realities of the nuclear age, make for a heightening awareness of the simple truth that if the human race is to survive, there must be a concerted effort on the part of all countries, a contribution of each to the safeguarding of peace and good--neighbourship on our planet. This is reflected in the constitutional confirmation of the commitment of states to the maintenance of peace among the nations. For example, the Italian Constitution adopted in 1947 states: "Italy rejects war as an instrument of infringing on the freedom of other nations and as a method of settling international conflicts..." In the preamble to the Chinese Constitution (adopted in 1982) we read that in its foreign policy, the P.R.C. "firmly adheres to five principles: mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual advantage, and peaceful co-existence." One of the articles of the U.S.S.R. Constitution establishes the Leninist principles of strengthening peace and international security and of developing cooperation between nations in Soviet foreign policy. It incorporates all the ten principles of interstate relations formulated in the Helsinki Final Act of the All-European Conference.

The constitutions of a number of countries envisage responsibility for actions running counter to or breaking their foreign policy principles. The Fundamental Law of the U.S.S.R. prohibits war propaganda and corresponding measures of punishment are established for it by the constituent republics' criminal codes.

The F.R.G. Constitution declares activities tending to disturb peaceful relations between nations and undertaken for this purpose, especially preparations for the war of aggression, unconstitutional and punishable.

In other words, some norms and principles of contemporary international law are being transformed into constitutional law.

How does the Fundamental Law of the United States look against this background? To begin with, it contains no provisions for the maintenance of international peace. The foreign policy articles are confined to relegating to the competence of Congress the right to declare war, to maintain armed forces, and so forth. The reason for this is that the text of the Constitution was drawn up 200 years ago. The participants in the Constitutional Convention thought in terms of their time.

Modern jurisprudence proceeds from the premise that a constitution can effectively perform the functions of the basic law of a country only if it gives timely reflection in its provisions to the social changes taking place. The well-known West German legal authority, Professor Konrad Hesse, holds that constitutional law is constantly developing inasmuch as the life it is called upon to regulate is constantly changing. The provisions of the fundamental law are brought into conformity with the new demands of society, Hesse says, through amendments to the constitution. This is borne out, as a matter of fact, by the American Constitution as well. In the 200 years since it was framed more than 20 amendments have been introduced, not counting the Supreme Court rulings interpreting constitutional provisions as applied to contemporary conditions.

I visited Philadelphia recently and saw the hall where after lengthy debates the Constitution was signed. Everything here is redolent of the past - the goose-quill pens, the pewter vessels, the delegates' canes. The carefully preserved atmosphere takes us back to the 18th century, with its political thinking, its legal norms and views, to the epoch when international law considered war a legitimate means of settling disputes between states and of conquering new territory. In those days there were no such norms as prohibition of aggression or renunciation of the use of force. None of the amendments introduced into the U.S. Constitution have related to foreign policy.

The present jubilee debates in the U.S. are devoted primarily to internal problems, in particular that of the division of prerogatives between Congress and the President. The country's international commitments do not figure in the discussions. The New York Times notes the inconsistency between the principal ideas of the Constitution and the political realities of our time: the men who framed the Fundamental Law were witnesses to the unlimited power of the King of England and sought to make the executive power in their own state responsible to the people. But in the past 20 years American presidents have conducted foreign policy as if they were kings. In the paper's opinion, Irangate is a striking example of the unceasing attempts to free the President of the limitations on his powers set by the Constitution and enable him to administer foreign policy as if by divine right.

The American "nation's cauldron," as depicted by an American 19th-century artist.

Speaking about the revolution which overthrew the thousand-year-old monarchy in France, Thomas Jefferson, one of the authors of the Constitution and the second president of the Unired States (1801-1809), said that every country can choose the form of government it wishes, and change it as it sees fit. The 40th President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, thinks differently. He believes that the United States has been assigned the role of world mentor and guarding of law and order and entitled to compel other peoples to live according to American laws. The most striking example of such an approach is his attitude to Nicaragua. The present U.S. President not only does not recognize the right of the Nicaraguan people to have their own form of government, but declared in one of his recent public speeches that the aim of the White House is to overthrow the lawful government of that country. No wonder Congress has stiffened control over the activities of the U.S. administration and turned the spotlight on its actions abroad.

However, it may be asked: what does it matter to the people of Grenada whether the seizure of their country by U.S. troops was carried out by order of the President or by decision of the U.S. Congress? And what difference does it make to the people of Nicaragua what decisions and legal acts are used to cover up Washington's aggressive moves against Sandino's country? The important thing for the world community is not the squabbles between the President and Congress - that is the Americans' internal affair - but the behaviour of the United States in the international arena, its observance of the generally recognized norms of international law, of its commitments under the Charter of the United Nations. The confirmation by the U.S. of these commitments by a constitutional act, as other countries have done, would, in my opinion, have a salutary effect on its relations with other countries.

Comparison between the American Constitution, that self-styled patriarch, with the constitutions of other countries, if only as regards the international aspect, gives no grounds for seeing it as an example worthy of emulation. Such a comparison rather prompts one to ask whether the American legislators might not do well to take a closer look at the experience of their neighbours, near and far, who inhabit our common earthly home?

Openness in America

GALINA SIDOROVA

I recall two remarks from the floor, both made by Americans, at a debate between Soviet and American journalists, political analysts and students at Dartmouth College in 1983.

"In this country I can get any information I want about the activities of any government body, and even of the President," one of them said. "I am confident that I am told everything. Even when I do not agree with what I hear, I am not disappointed. Because I feel free to criticize whomever and whatever I please..."

"I've been criticizing our government for more than 40 years, but nothing has changed," said the other.

Both Americans were right in a sense. Only they viewed their democracy from different angles. One was satisfied by the process itself - which is quite typical of Americans. The other was dissatisfied with the lack of results.

However, when the avalanche of details about the current Washington scandal was let loose, I would very much have liked to meet the first of those two Americans. Unfortunately I did not remember his name.

"I am told everything...."

He spoke in a tone of unshakable certainty. Yet there had been Watergate. And before that, Vietnam. And now this new "gate." And each time the Americans discovered at the last moment that vital political issues are decided secretly from them and the "We, the people of the United States" had been either kept in ignorance or simply lied to.

Our journal has written in considerable detail about Irangate and its heroes. I shall not go into it again. But there is one sidelight associated with the name of Oliver North that has a direct bearing on the subject we are dealing with. I learned of this "sidelight" from the Miami Herald. The man who had dug it up, Alfonso Chardy, of the newspaper's Washington Bureau, had walked on thin ice for quite some time after the publication of his exlosive article, which earned him the marked displeasure of government officials and the admiration of his fellow newsmen.

His article disclosed that from the moment Reagan entered the White House some of his high-ranking advisers operated like a parallel government outside the traditional department and not accountable to Congress. And by no means only in the Iran-contras affair.

In 1981 North, who had just been transferred from the Marine -Corps to the National Security Council, was assigned to following the President with the dispatch case containing the secret plans for the eventuality of an emergency situation, viz., nuclear war. Later the Lieutenant Colonel's duties were broadened. He was included in the national crisis planning group. The Federal Emergency Management Agency drew up a plan for the temporary suspension of the Constitution in the event of nuclear war, uprisings and general mobilization. The prehistory of the plan is associated with the name of the former head of the agency, L. Guiffrida. At one time, while still at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, he had drafted a very similar document: on the proclamation of an emergency in the event of a "national uprising by black militants," providing for countrywide roundups and dispatch to "assembly centres" of 20 million Afro-Americans.

Lieutenant Colonel North was the unofficial liaison man between the agency and the National Security Council.

After intervention by the Attorney General, the plan affair was hushed up and all mention of the agency disappeared from the press. North was then given the assignment connected with the notorious Iran and contras affair. That is the background.

It is a pity I was unable to discuss it with the aforementioned American at Dartmouth. True, from my experience of association with his compatriots, I may say that many of them prefer to forget unpleasant things, to brush aside whatever does not fit in with customary notions about life or conflicts with such notions. To challenge the stereotypes in the spirit of the Founding Fathers is clearly not in vogue today. The Baltimore Chronicle called this a historical process as a result of which "American citizens will sit ever more passively on the sidelines, permitting the continued erosion of our democratic way of life and government."

I have many friends among a different kind of Americans - concerned, searching people, open to new ideas. And hence I cannot fully share the paper's views on this score. Although there is indeed a tendency to passivity and forgetfulness in American society.

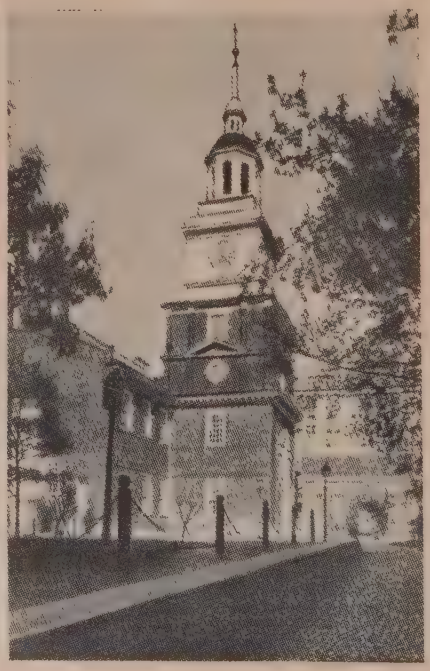
"I say what I please...."

Thomas Jefferson once made a remark flattering for journalists. He said he would prefer newspapers without a government to a government without newspapers. True, once he became President, he decided to do without some publica-

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibitng the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the Press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Bill of Rights, Amendment 1

Philadelphia. The Declaration of Independence was signed in this building. The Constitutional Convention was held here in 1787.



tions. Nevertheless the great American appreciated the value for the democratic process of the printed word.

American research data show that public interest in such problems as civil rights, the war in Vietnam, crime and inflation has in many respects been a reflection of the attention given to these issues by the mass media. Although of course it is a two-way process.

In recent years I have had many meetings with American journalists. We spoke about how we work, we here and they there. There has hardly been a discussion without mention of the contribution made by journalists of both countries to the creation of a distorted image of each other, about the one-sidedness of information. The latest such discussion took place literally the other day in our office within the framework of the meeting of cultural workers of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. which took place in Moscow under the auspices of the American Center for American-Soviet Dialogue and the Soviet Peace Committee.

In my opinion the selection and presentation of news about each other has until now depended in a large measure on the state of the political relations between our two countries. In this respect the press is far from free on both sides of the ocean. It will be recalled that in the 1970s we wrote more "favourably" about America than we did in the early 1980s: actually it was simply a matter of giving more diversified information about that country and not merely criticizing one or another aspect of its policy. With the advent of President Reagan, who steered a patently confrontation course in relation to the U.S.S.R., we had every justification for coming down hard on his administration. But in doing so did we not forget that America lives on many different planes, that there is an America of very different, normal people, not necessarily exactly like ourselves but with concerns very similar to our own? Did we not forget about that America with which, no matter who heads it tomorrow or ten years hence, we shall have to share this planet?

I am personally convinced that journalists can and should play a more serious and active role in Soviet-American relations than have to date. Especially as regards cultivating in our readers and listeners a new, "human" vision of each other, and giving really objective information about the life of our peoples. Such information cannot be exclusively "good" or exclusively "bad." It must be as multiform as life itself.

My American opposite numbers agreed with this point of view but partly. Some of them could not refrain from remarking: "We understand that you have glasnost now. But just the same, we in the United States are freer to speak our minds. I can say what I please..."

True enough, as regards internal problems the American newspapers literally inundate the readers with a flood of the most diverse opinions. But when it comes to the "chief ideological opponent," the Soviet Union, they all strike the same keynote. Of course there are exceptions among the American journalists. But the general tendency is plain to see.

Stepping into a news dealer's in Burlington, Iowa, a small town on the banks of the Mississippi, in the summer of 1986, I got quite a shock. Prominently displayed there was a copy of Pravda. An exact replica of the paper published in Moscow but translated into English - the whole paper all the way to the television programme. It cost not four kopecks but 2.5 dollars.

What was this? An instance of glasnost American-style? Generally speaking, it was. Except that the Burlington news dealer gets two copies from an enterprising Minneapolis businessman who organized the translation and publication of the newspaper primarily for the local university. The news dealer himself had not read it. Nor had most of the people I spoke with. Here are some of the answers I was given. "The style of journalism is unusual," they said. "We didn't know such a paper was sold in our town." "There are too many other papers." "I get the news from the TV." No one had heard anything about the Soviet peace initiatives. Nor could anyone say anything intelligent about our country, and the minds of many were closed by prejudice.

In general, whenever my American counterparts begin to try to persuade me of their independence and objectivity I cannot help responding with counter-questions. For instance, why is it that in the U.S.S.R. the Soviet-American TV bridges are shown on the first national channel and at the most convenient times while in the United States they are shown only by some small companies in some states? Why was the conference of Soviet and American public opinion in Jurmala the main item of news in the Soviet media whereas American newsmen gave such meagre coverage to the analogous meeting in Chautauqua and to the opinions voiced by its participants? Why do some American correspondents in Moscow say one thing here and write something altogether different about our country, frequently the very opposite, when they return home? I need not continue.

I remember that at Moscow University's faculty of journalism we were told quite simply that the policy of the press is dictated by the newspaper magnates, who concentrate in their hands more and more newspapers and TV stations and hence, of course, call the tune. Incidentally, in 1982 twenty big companies controlled more than half of all the daily papers in the United States. A few years later the big newspaper takeovers by the strongest had reduced the number to 14. And another alarming fact: many publishing houses which put out school textbooks belong to corporations that produce electronic equipment for the American armed forces - ITT, IBM and Westinghouse.

However, here too oversimplification should be avoided. Otherwise how explain the fact that the newspaper "emperor" Murdoch does not impose his own political prejudices on all his "subjects" but confines himself to piling up profits. A few years ago, for example, he took possession of the Village Voice, a weekly catering to New York intellectuals with leftist leanings, which to this day carries exposés of the financial machinations of politicians and criticizes administration policy in Central America.

The result is something of a balance in the matter of criticism - that same safety valve that was built into American society by the far-sighted men who framed the Constitution.

That is why certain stereotyped approaches to different problems systematically repeat themselves. They are part of the system, the product not only of conscious manipulation but also of the economic and ideological conditions in which the mass media exist in the United States.

...For 20 years the dean of American TV commentators, Walter Cronkite, ended his evening newscast on CBS with the same phrase: "And that's the way it is." On retiring in 1980, this American who, judging by the opinion polls, then enjoyed greater confidence among his compatriots than anyone else, admitted that that was not exactly the way it is. "My lips have been kind of buttoned for almost twenty years," he said. "CBS News doesn't really believe in commentary."

Glasnost. That word borrowed from the Russian has become part of the English language. The Americans use it. But how do they understand it? A journalist from a local newspaper in Minneapolis asked me: "Glasnost is when things in your country will be the same as in ours, right?"

Without indulging in polemics and simplifying things somewhat, I tried to convey to him my own understanding of the word. Glasnost is when I say what I think and write what I think. It also implies a sense of responsibility for what one writes. It is openness in political decision making and in the process of state administration. It is when you yourself are a participant and architect of the developments under way in the country.

Glasnost, born of the needs of the internal development of Soviet society, is reflected in the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R., making it more open and democratic. In the context of the interdependence of all the members of the world community, glasnost becomes not only a Russian concept. In the real democratization of international and domestic life lies our common future. ■

TAKING UP A POINT

The processes of evolution, emancipation and the scientific and technological revolution have led to a situation where women are equal to men in practically every aspect. They are trained in professions that have always been considered male preserves, and their sports records are almost on a par with those set by men. It looks as if there is a process of physiological, intellectual and emotional levelling under way. Could it be that one day we will no longer be able to distinguish between what should be done by men and what should be done by women?

GENNADY PESOCHNY
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

LARISA KUZNETSOVA, journalist, replies

Spare rib?

You are quite right. It is often said nowadays that no job can be considered exclusively male or female, and one should not really believe that some jobs are incompatible with the femininity of women or the virility of men.

That view originated, quite appropriately, at exactly the right time. It gained currency after the division of labour had ceased to be rigid, the number of exclusively male or female occupations had declined dramatically, mechanization and automation of production had made strides forward, and the relationships between men and women in the family and workplace had become equal in principle, or showed a tendency towards equality. At the same time, the vast experience amassed by mankind gives us no right to lose all vigilance in the face of notions of women as a work force in general that are very often short-sighted, naive or downright cunning.

You talk of the physiological levelling of the sexes. Well, let me take up that point. A comparative analysis of the anatomy and physiology of the two sexes shows that men and women differ from each other in weight of brain and body, length of limb (the ratio between a female arm and a male arm is 91.5:100), and muscular strength. According to physiologists women reach their peak of muscular strength at the age of 20, but even then their strength amounts to 65 per cent of that of an average male. At the age of 55 it amounts to a mere 54 per cent. That is quite logical, as muscles account for 40 per cent of the weight of males and about 30 per cent of the weight of females. Men and women have the same number of muscles but taken together they display different qualities in men and women. An extra rib, by the way, has been encountered in men three times as often as in women, which of course does not square at all with the Biblical creation of Eve from Adam's rib.

Men have an indisputable motor advantage over women and this has been borne out by sports records, that testing range of man and his potential, set internationally over many years. Men's and women's sporting events are separate in whatever sport you consider, jumping, swimming, or gymnastics.

A few years ago computations were made in the G.D.R. to compare male and female sports records. In many sports events women's records attain 90 per cent of world records for men. Women equalize with men in sports records after a lag of 60-80 years. At any rate it is absolutely clear that the best women runners are no match for the fastest men and that the best women jumpers are no match for male jumpers in the top league. They are likely to catch up no sooner than half a century from now.

Let us now leave sport and get down to business. It is very often the case that as far as work is concerned the performance of men and women is judged on the same score board and it is a widely held view that this is just how it should be. It looks as though ethical standards in sports are far superior to those in the workplace. I am sure that you will agree that using the same yardstick to measure the performance of men and women where physical exertion is required puts women at a disadvantage in the workplace, unlike any sporting situation where male and female athletes are judged separately. Surely that, to use Lenin's phrase, is a clear "violation of equality and an injustice." It would appear therefore to be reasonable either to introduce separate work quotas for men and women or to withdraw women from employment in areas where competition with men is inevitable. If we are to consider women as an essential part of nature we must agree that letting Eve do what only Adam can is a gross violation of the planet's ecology.

The above discussion applies only to areas of employment where automation and mechanization are as yet at a low level and where human hands still do the job of machines. Productivity here is of necessity low and practically everything runs counter to common sense and very often presents a health hazard. But that is clearly something that is on the way out. Situations of that kind combine ethical incongruity with low returns on investment and inevitably industrialized nations try to avoid them. However, there is more to it than that. Advances in

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ology have resulted in employment
es hitherto unheard of in chemical,
technical, power and nuclear po-
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great deal of caution must be
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vas thought until recently, for
e, that female athletes tend to
male behavioral patterns. A study
group of Canadian tennis and
ll players has revealed, however,
male athletes in the sample group
combined highly developed
traits with competitiveness and
drive to win.
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a bisexual condition at the prenatal
of our lives at which both options of
pment are still open. It is towards
er prenatal stages that the differen-
erge in the body and the brain. The
ality of the central nervous system,
s the right term, goes quite deep. In
words, the brain stores both
oral patterns and the degree to
they develop is determined by
background and upbringing. We
t girls with dolls and boys with toy
cars, because in this way we encourage them to follow a particular behavioral pattern in the future.

The in-built differences between the mental functions of men and women are so slight that they are very difficult to detect. It seems, however, that men tend to display a broader range of IQ variation, in other words, very stupid and very bright males are more numerous than their female opposite numbers. There appear to be more women in the average IQ range than men. In proportion to the weight of the body the weight of a female brain is higher than that of a man. A female brain has more convolutions and over the age of 40 women tend to better preserve their intellectual ability. Men are superior in thinking in spatial terms, orientation, and of course they are clever with all things mechanical (it pays to give little boys toy cars), while women display a faster rate of perception, perceive things more accurately, and their speech is more fluent.

It does not appear to be possible to arrive at this point at any consistent theory indicating what professional and managerial jobs are best suited for women, but it would seem that women can do well in middle-level executive posts, while men are well-advised to take up both top-level and bottom-level jobs in all professions and trades. The pyramid of every trade or profession must be shouldered by men, or there may be damage done to the very fabric of society. Call it levelling if you will....

We live in a world that is changing fast, where the polarization of the sexes in the professions and managerial situations is clearly declining because it is not something built into the nature of the human mind. At the same time it is my view that the polarization of the sexes in jobs requiring physical exertion must remain there, if not be made more rigid, because here the differences are organic.

On the strength of the above there is every reason to believe that women must be encouraged to go ahead with their careers in every job they can physically handle, but it will take some time before the century-old stereotypes of men and women and their part in society have been dashed. It will take considerable effort as well. Changing the stereotypes is tantamount to changing our way of thinking, and this is not easy to do. Meanwhile, women are, as before, actively engaged in social labour and, as it should be, experience will outstrip, and is already outstripping, our consciousness.

Two letters from India

One viewpoint

Reading Soviet newspapers and magazines recently, I have come to the conclusion that perestroika has not yet figured in your mass media dealing with international affairs. Take, for instance, the coverage by the Soviet periodical press of developments in India, where I live.

Reports about our country still contain much optimistic enthusiasm, smoothing over acute embarrassing problems. To listen to them, ours is almost a socialist country. I understand that in your conditions, the press is an instrument of foreign policy. But you cannot attribute the negative facts of our life, such as, for instance, the scandal about the government purchase of arms from the West, solely to the intrigues of external forces. This Indian Watergate is a product of our bourgeois society.

Your stories about how Indians feel about the Soviet Union and I do not mean in your magazine alone are also one-sided, because the approach here to your country is very varied. I fully agree with you in that even those strata of Indian society which do not share your ideology (I am among them) think that the Soviet Union is a great power, a reliable political partner that has proved more than once that it is India's genuine friend to be relied on in time of need. At the same time, many people are of the opinion that Soviet socio-economic practice, which worked perfectly well at a certain stage in your history, in conditions of scientific and technological progress does not ensure proper standards in the area of the most advanced technologies. For the sake of justice, I should say that this opinion is cleverly played up by the Western mass media. In this connection, the internal processes currently under way in your country add one more important feature to the image of the Soviet Union as a politically reliable partner: your society is also attractive now in its ability to surmount the problems of the scientific and technological revolution.

Without any intention of making a definite judgement, an opinion to be regarded as a touchstone for the authenticity of your approach to glasnost, I hope that the publication of my letter will be a confirmation of the fact that perestroika has become a feature of your international journalism.

GOPALASWAMI RAMAMURTHY
Delhi, India

Like a looking-glass

The world is like a looking glass: if you smile, it smiles; if you frown, it frowns back. If you look at it through a red glass, all seems red and rosy; if through a blue, all blue; if through a smoked one, all dull and dingy. Always try then to look at the bright side of things; almost everything in the world has a bright side.

VINEETA CHAUDHARI
Budaun, India

WHY IN 1939?

Reflections on the origins of the second world war

VALENTIN FALIN

There have been hardly any "calm years" in the 70-year-old history of our state and its foreign policy. Yet one can single out particularly hard, critical years. The prewar year 1939 was certainly among them. This period merits close analysis because a huge amount of disinformation and falsehood has accumulated concerning the events that took place in it, notably the Soviet-German non-aggression pact.The Soviet diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing war are being distorted and passed over in silence. This issue carries the first in a series of articles by Valentin Falin devoted to these problems.

The German philosopher Oswald Spengler is now known only to specialists, but at the beginning of the century he "ruled the minds" of Western intellectuals. His books, especially his major work, "Decline of the West," were political best-sellers and he was regarded as a prophet. No wonder the young American scientist Stanley Lovell (who later became an important intelligence agent) decided to pay a visit to the pundit to ask him when the second world war would begin.

"That is easy to answer," replied Spengler. "No one generation of men can successfully fight two wars. It is only when men who have never seen war at first hand are available that another world conflict can start. Here we are in 1934. World War I was in 1914. A generation is twenty-five years, so World War II will begin in 1939."

Simple, isn't it? Too simple, because the problems of war and peace are not determined solely by demographic factors. The answer to the question in the title of this article calls for a close look at the totality of international processes and phenomena in their interconnections and contradictions.

The source of "appeasement"

What did the 1930s bring for peace in Europe? The advent of Hitler to power in 1933 marked a dangerous watershed in the life of the whole continent and the whole international community. Leadership of one of the most powerful states was seized by a group which by and large did not conceal its desire to redraw the political map, first of Europe and then of other regions, to ensure its "vital interests" through force and the violation of the legitimate vital interests of others. It was necessary to discern the imminent danger and take an unambiguous stand with regard to it. This had to be done quickly if disaster was to be averted. People had to rise above their differences, frictions and arguments in order to come together on the main issue of the 1930s, i.e., preventing war and consolidating peace. Peace, that is, not for the elect, not for the handful of states that considered themselves masters of the world, but for all countries and peoples.

Those years saw the birth not only of the notion of "collective security" but also of "appeasement." The "appeasers" had no intention of calling on the aggressors to show common sense and responsibility. They were still less concerned with making war materially impossible, though the necessary prerequisites for doing so existed, thanks largely to the efforts of Soviet diplomacy. For example, as early as 1934 the Soviet Union proposed that the General Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments be turned into a Permanent Peace Conference empowered to render "timely and feasible assistance - moral, economic, financial or other - to threatened states." France evinced an interest in this initiative while England opposed it.

What was the U.S. reaction? Secretary of State Cordell Hull, talking to Soviet Chargé d'Affaires Boris Skvirsky, declared that he could not tie his hands by speaking for or against the project. While citing alleged reservations on the part of Americans about participation in an international political organization, Washington was in fact held back by political motives. One of these was as follows: rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. on any major international issue would inevitably have an anti-British edge to it. For at that time the British were openly hostile to the U.S.S.R.

There were ambiguities too in the French attitude. The French wanted the Soviet Union to assume unilateral obligations, notably in the talks on the draft Eastern Pact (1933-34). When Joseph Paul-Boncour told the Soviet Ambassador Valerian Dovgalevsky, "we are embarking on a matter of great importance. We have started making history today," it sounded fine. But it failed to convey the fact that simultaneously France was making a very different kind of "history" in conjunction with Berlin, especially in the wake of the murder of Louis Barthou. The situation was not changed by the signing on May 2, 1935 of a Franco-Soviet accord on mutual assistance: the new Foreign Minister, Pierre Laval, put his signature to the agreement, as he himself told his Western counterparts, to strengthen his hand in negotiations on a settlement with Germany.

Early in 1935 London made another attempt to come to terms with Germany. This time it was prepared not only to legalize German expansionism, but to provide the Reich with the requisite weapons. The calculation was that "the need for expansion will force Germany towards the East as being the only field open to her, and as long as the Bolshevist regime exists in Russia it is impossible for this expansion to take merely the form of peaceful penetration." This was stated in the Foreign Office Memorandum of February 7, 1935.

Hitler, who had reliable information about the sentiments prevalent in London, announced the creation of German Air Force on March 9,1935 and reintroduced

military conscription a week later. **From that moment until the beginning of the war, talks between Western powers and the Reich were conducted on Berlin's terms.** At a cabinet meeting on April 8, 1935, the British Conservatives decided that Britain would not undertake to prevent violations of peace anywhere in the capitalist world. They placed themselves at the head of the "appeasement" front which, according to their plans, was to evolve into a general anti-Soviet "crusade."

The Nazis readily tuned in to the wave length that lulled the British into complacency. When German Foreign Minister Constantin Freiherr von Neurath claimed that the German Navy must be equal to 35 per cent of the British Navy, he cited the need to ensure German dominance in the Baltic Sea. On June 18, 1935, Britain and Germany signed a naval agreement which in effect proclaimed the Baltic to be a sphere of German influence with each individual country of the region, including Poland, at the mercy of Berlin. Nor was the U.S. to remain on the sidelines. American diplomatic representatives in the main capitalist countries assured the Germans that Washington would not mind German expansion if and as long as it proceeded without armed violence and was directed towards the U.S.S.R. In the end the U.S. administration took the same devious position in the face of Italy's aggression against Ethiopia.

In 1936-37 the principle that international security was indivisible was, if it was recognized by the West at all, at odds with the narrowly pragmatic approach: how much would adherence to the principle cost, and would it not be cheaper to be unprincipled? The British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin said as early as 1936 that in the event of a conflict Britain could defeat Germany with the help of Russia but clearly the result would be Bolshevism in Germany. London was thinking along opposite lines: a defeat of the Bolshevist Soviet Union in which Nazi Germany would take part. Roosevelt did not take his cue from the British. Yet the logic of opportunism drove even him into the vicious circle of dual and triple assessments which made a travesty of international law.

Ethiopia, Spain, China

The events in Spain and China were an acid test of the intentions of all the main protagonists in the future conflict in Europe and the Far East. It was here that the equation of the greater and the lesser evil was being solved in miniature. Under pressure from England and France, in August 1936, 27 European states signed an agreement on "non-interference" in Spanish affairs. The republic was left at the mercy of the fascists. The "Berlin-Rome axis" was being forged in the Spanish theatre. The signing, on November 25, 1936, of an "anti-Comintern Pact" between Germany and Japan, supplemented by an Italo-Japanese treaty a week later, provided a prelude to larger-scale aggression. War was imminent.

Satisfied that the U.S.A., Britain and France would remain inactive, and having secured German and Italian pledges of active military help if the U.S.S.R. found itself on China's side in the Far Eastern conflict, Japan provoked a clash with Chinese military personnel near Luguoqiao Bridge outside Peking on July 7, 1937. This was a sufficient pretext for Japanese troops to in vade Northern and, subsequently, Central China.

The Chinese government came to the Council of the League of Nations asking for sanctions against Tokyo. The U.S.S.R. supported China. The British and French succeeded in getting the question of the Sino-Japanese conflict withdrawn from the League's frame of reference to be put before a special conference of countries interested in the situation in the Far East. Having proclaimed its neutrality with regard to the Civil War in Spain, the U.S. failed to apply the same law to Japan.

At a conference held in Brussels from November 3 to 24, 1937, the United States anticipated the British and French behaviour in Munich. According to Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, the U.S.

Hitler's Germany prepares for war: the Fuehrer reviewing new weaponry.

Herman Goering visiting Jozef Beck: Germany tried to draw Poland into an anti-Soviet bloc.

was unable to distinguish between the aggressor and the victim and did not have any grounds for sympathizing with the victim.

Ethiopia, Spain, China. The link between these events which took place simultaneously in various parts of the world is not often mentioned. Yet one can discern a certain rhythm of events, a kind of periodicity in the actions of the aggressors as they perfected their methods of conquest, the strategy of defeating the victims of their expansion one by one.

On March 12, 1938, Germany annexed Austria. Two days previously Sir Horace Wilson had conveyed Neville Chamberlain's message to Berlin stating that London (aware of the forthcoming Anschluss) would remain committed to seeking agreement with Germany and Italy. Austria was being offered to Hitler as a kind of down payment. The interests of the U.S.S.R., remarked Horace Wilson, could be neglected because the social system there would one day "melt away."

Italy too received its share of the appeasers' generosity. On April 16, 1938 Chamberlain and Mussolini signed a Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation sealed by the British recognition of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia and of Franco as a belligerent party.

This paved the way for the rape of the Spanish Republic.

At about the same time Japan - with the eloquent silence of the U.S., Britain and France - was testing Soviet patience and the strength of our defence. The series of acts of sabotage and provocation was crowned with the attack on Soviet border units near Lake Khasan on July 29, 1938. This was reconnaissance in force. Its results were awaited in all the imperialist capitals. On August 9 Soviet troops defeated the aggressors. And what if the defeat had not been as quick and the U.S.S.R. had shown weakness? The unknown lake might have become the cradle of incalculable complications.

Were the American, British and French leaders aware that war was round the corner and that their flirting with the aggressors only aggravated the danger? Yes, they were.

As early as November 1937, Britain and France agreed to "concede" Czechoslovakia to the Nazis if the annexation of the Sudetenland was achieved without a shooting war. Chamberlain's thesis that Britain should not be drawn into the war over Czechoslovakia produced a curious echo across the Atlantic: nothing was happening in Europe that would warrant a recourse to arms by the U.S. It was a typical imperialist search for a modus vivendi in which small countries were assigned a place in the retinue of this or that sovereign. Small countries could be tossed from one sphere of influence to another. It was all in a day's work for the imperialists. After all, nothing was happening that the U.S. had not tried in Central and Latin America and that did not fit in perfectly with Washington's idea of classic "democracy."

Following the example of the great powers, Poland was anxious not to remain politically on the sidelines. The U.S. Ambassador to Warsaw Drexel Biddle, Jr reported back to his government that Poland desired close relations with Germany and welcomed cooperation between Germany and Italy in opposition to Communist Russia, which it regarded as a direct and immediate threat to Poland.

On March 12, 1938, the day of the Anschluss of Austria, Warsaw committed itself to annexing Lithuania. The decision was preceded by a visit by the Polish Foreign Minister Jozef Beck to Berlin. The Polish Minister pledged support for the plan to liquidate Austria in return for Germany's agreement not to impede the annexation of Lithuania by Poland (with the exception of the Klaipeda area). The agreement was sealed by statements (Beck to Goering in January 1938 and Goering to Ambassador Lipski in March 1938). Anticipating Soviet countermeasures, Berlin proposed to agree on "Polish-German military collaboration against Russia." On March 17 the Polish Ambassador to Berlin Josef Lipski received instructions to convey to Goering that Warsaw was ready to take the Reich's interests into account in the context of "our possible action against Lithuania." It was assumed that Polish and German troops would enter corresponding regions of Lithuania simultaneously.

Poland's coordination of its planned aggression against Lithuania with the annexation of Austria gave the nazi rulers grounds to believe that Warsaw would not stand in the way of their intentions with regard to Czechoslovakia. This conclusion was corroborated by the Polish reaction to the Soviet warning which disrupted the anti-Lithuanian action. By way of revenge, Poland attempted to form an anti-Soviet bloc including Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria, Finland, Latvia and Estonia. One of the main aims of the proposed bloc was to prevent the U.S.S.R. from rendering help to Czechoslovakia and France in the event of a conflict with Germany. The various plans for dismembering the Soviet Union were discussed with Bucharest and most probably with other countries: the areas to the south of the Vinnitsa-Kiev-Desna River line were to be taken over by the Romanians and everything to the north of that line, including Leningrad, was to become Polish. This was the situation that had taken shape by the time of the Munich deal.

(To be continued)

He came every day. Tall, lean, with curly hair and professorial spectacles, in a long linen robe, he would stand in First Avenue opposite the entrance to the U.N. General Assembly, the venue of the conference.

He would not give his name to reporters, calling himself an "envoy of the millions of U.S. homeless and unemployed" deprived by militarism of bread and shelter. His appeal for peace and good-neighbourliness was addressed to the representatives of over 140 states and 200 non-government organizations from all continents taking part in the conference.

U.S. boycott

On the opposite side of First Avenue, the United States' U.N. representation has its premises. When the delegates were arriving for the sessions in the morning, the doors were kept pointedly shut. The U.S. was boycotting the conference, thereby indicating that it saw no link between disarmament and development. Moreover, official Washington had opposed the very holding of such a conference. The New York Times sharply criticized the administration's attitude. "This boycott," the paper wrote, "is part of a larger trend, which has found the U.S. in the Reagan years resisting international cooperation - in the Law of the Sea treaty, World Court jurisdiction in the Nicaragua conflict."

For all the rhetoric of U.S. officials, the vacant seats behind the plaque reading "United States of America" at the New York conference left no doubts whatever about who really opposed solution of these urgent complicated problems.

U.S.S.R.: fundamental issue of security

The Soviet Union has always held that disarmament and development are interlinked. A historical detail: in his instructions to the Soviet delegation leaving for the 1922 Genoa international conference, the first such assembly in which the Soviet government took part, Lenin urged that it should be turned into a conference on the economic development of Europe and disarmament.

Today the Soviet Union regards disarmament and development as the material foundation of international security, which is being created by the combined efforts of all states and nations.

The U.S.S.R. has proposed that the problems of disarmament and development should be discussed at a summit meeting of the U.N. Security Council

Two approaches

The International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development has ended at the U.N. headquarters in New York

member states, that a comparative analysis of the military doctrines of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty should be made, that agreement should be reached on the drawing up by each state of a national plan for conversion, and that a Disarmament for Development Fund should be formed under U.N. auspices.

This position was expressed in Mikhail Gorbachev's message to the conference, in the speech of the head of the Soviet delegation, U.S.S.R. Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky, as well as in the joint memorandum of the socialist countries, entitled Disarmament for Development.

In response, the U.S. State Department declared: "The concept that the engine of development is resource transfer from the developed to the developing world and that disarmament should be pursued, because it would provide additional resources for transfer is not supportable."

The West: contradictions and paradoxes

Practically all Western states (in particular the North European countries, Australia and Canada) admitted the existence of a link between disarmament and development. However, most of them, though attending the conference, pursued the same ends as the U.S. sought to achieve by its boycott: to prevent further discussion of disarmament and development problems and adoption of any specific measures in this field, and simply bury the whole concept as soon as the conference is over.

This was confirmed at the sittings of the three working groups of experts, each of which concerned itself with one of the three items on the conference agenda: the various aspects of the linkage between disarmament and development; the implications of the level and magnitude of the continuing military expenditure, especially of the nuclear states,for the world economy; ways and means of releasing additioal resources through disarmament measures for development purposes.

Two conceptions of security, new and old political thinking clashed here. The position was further complicated by the fact that, owing to the stand taken by the Western powers, the draft of the final document, whose articles were discussed by the working groups, had not been endorsed by the conference preparatory committee. There had been no preliminary consensus on the document submitted for discussion.

In the course of the debate, most capitalist countries insisted that the final document should be as brief as possible,

Drawing by I. Smirnov

and very general. They denied, as it were, the need for establishing a mechanism to channel means released as a result of disarmament to development purposes. Paradoxically, even the figures cited in the draft final document were questioned - notwithstanding the fact that they had been published in authoritative Western sources.

Attitudes of developing countries

Clearly manifest in this situation was the closeness of the positions of the socialist and developing countries. The young states urged the establishment of an international mechanism for transferring to them the resources released by disarmament measures. They also supported in principle the idea of setting up an international Disarmament for Development Fund.

However, some representatives of young states showed a lack of faith in the possibility of obtaining any substantial resources through disarmament, since considerable means were required for destroying the existing arsenals and putting, where possible, military facilities to peaceful uses.

This is true, of course. But one cannot fail to see that in longer perspective conversion would have a beneficial effect on the world economy and international relations. Their demilitarization would make for accelerated economic growth of all countries, and there would be a corresponding increase in development aid.

The delegates of young states were more concerned about the non-military factors posing an immediate threat to their socio-economic progress - starvation, diseases, illiteracy, population growth, unfair capitalist division of labour, growth of foreign indebtedness. As one Third World delegate aptly put it, disarmament and development are of course interlinked but should not be regarded as communicating vessels. Unfortunately, the representatives of developing states spoke far less about the negative effect of the growth of their own military expenditure on economic development.

Admittedly, the main responsibility for the destinies of peace rests with the leading nuclear powers, the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. And of course it is they that must give the lead in taking radical arms reduction steps and employing the funds released for development purposes. But the process should equally involve the developed and the developing countries, and especially those of the latter which have themselves become producers and exporters of arms and spend a substantial portion of their national product on military purposes.

The final document of the conference, adopted by consensus, was naturally the product of lengthy debate and compromise. Had it not been for Western opposition, the document might have been more constructive. Still, it contains the main thing - recognition of the fact that there is a direct link between disarmament and development. The representatives of the majority of countries and non-government organizations have decided that the question of how these problems are being resolved shortly will be brought once more to the attention of the international community.

ALEXEI KIREYEV

New York-Moscow

The record of a seven-year slaughter

The war between Iran and Iraq is seven years old. This conflict is sometimes called strange. Indeed, a sweeping glance at the military hostilities inevitably raises the question: what has compelled these two neighbouring peoples to engage in killing each other over such a long period of time while gaining no perceptible edge or victory as a result?

The war is being fought mostly within a narrow strip along the state border. For a long time the frontline has not budged, turning to all effects into a maw devouring hundreds of thousands of young lives for no particular reason. Moreover, a web of intrigues is being woven round the meaningless bloodshed, which threatens to escalate at the merest spark beyond the limits of the region.

It would be appropriate at this point to recapitulate on the development of the conflict.

March 6, 1975. The Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq and the Shah of Iran meeting in Algeria sign the border agreement, clause 5 of which reads that "the line of their land and river frontiers is firm, stable and definitive." At the time it was believed that at last an end had been put to the disputes between the two countries that had more than once caused armed incidents in the frontier area, and that the frontier river Shatt-al-Arab (Arvand-Roud in Persian) would become a river of joint peaceful navigation.

February 10-12, 1979. The Pahlavi dynasty is overthrown in Iran. The religious leaders headed by the Ayatollah Khomeini gain ground politically.

June 1979. Teheran starts to accuse the Iraqi air force of violating Iranian air space and bombing villages in the frontier area. Baghdad either denies the charges or offers its apologies for "mistakes" and promises to pay damages.

August 18, 1979. Ayatollah Khomeini orders that the frontier with Iraq be closed.

November-December 1979. A series of mutual diplomatic moves: the closing of the Iraqi consulates in Khurramshahr and Kermanshah and of the Iranian consulates in Kerbela and Basrah. Several diplomats on both sides are expelled. Sharply worded letters of protest are exchanged.

December 1979. The Iranian mass media publish a number of reports of border incidents, accusing the Iraqi side of aggression. Iraq denies the reports.

December 23, 1979. Iraq's Deputy Premier Tareq Aziz says that Iraq favours a review of the Algerian agreement. "We signed it in view of strong internal and external pressure,but now we demand its revision and the return of our Arab lands," he declared.

March 2, 1980. The governments of the two countries downgrade their diplomatic missions to the level of chargé d'affaires a.i., accusing both ambassadors of interference in the internal affairs of the country of accreditation.

April 7, 1980. Iranian Guardians of the Islamic Revolution and troops "liberate" a district of Begeisi, north of Qasr-e-Shirin from Iraq. Iraq intensifies the deportation of Iranians to Iran, which has been going on for some time. Their number reaches five thousand. About 120 Iraqis are deported from Iran.

April 8, 1980. The armies of the two countries are put on the alert.

April 9, 1980. Iran's Foreign Minister states that Iran "has made a decision to overthrow the Baathist regime headed by Saddam Hussain, who is an agent of the U.S." The Baghdad newspaper Al-Jumhuriyah accuses Teheran of intending "to export its so-called revolution to neighbouring countries."

April 29, 1980. The number of Iranians deported from Iraq tops 30,000.

May 19, 1980. The Iraqi Foreign Ministry accuses the Iranian authorities of violating the diplomatic immunity of Iraqi embassy personnel and seizing the diplomatic bag.

June 4, 1980. Iran reports a number of armed incidents on the frontier. Iraq claims that the actions of its troops were provoked by Iranian shellings of frontier posts.

June 25 and 26, 1980. According to a statement of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, Iranian tanks and artillery have shelled a number of points on the border. This statement is followed by a spate of reciprocal accusations to the effect that the opposite side has carried out armed attacks on border posts and populated areas.

September 10, 1980. President Saddam Hussain of Iraq states at a meeting of the Council of Ministers: "Iraq does not desire war with Iran but has decided to recover all Iraqi territories seized by Iran." Iraq's Foreign Minister explains in an interview for the INA agency that Iraq holds that Iran has failed to honour the clauses of the Algerian agreement and has not returned some of the Iraqi territories. It is reported in Baghdad that as a result of fighting Iraqi troops "have reached Iraq's international frontier determined by international agreements"and have established control over a number of guard posts."

September 22, 1980. This day, when extensive military operations started along the entire front line and the Iraqis crossed the border, penetrating 60 kilometres into Iranian territory, is considered by Iran as "the start of the Iraqi aggression," and the war as such. Baghdad, in its turn, regards September 4 as the beginning of the war when, according to a statement of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, the Iranians shelled several Iraqi areas.

September 23, 1980. The U.N. Security Council calls on Iran and Iraq to end hostilities and enlist the help of a mediator in the settlement of the dispute. The following day, the Security Council adopts Resolution 479 in this connection.

September 27, 1980. The Organization of the Islamic Conference decides to send a goodwill mission to Teheran and Baghdad. Iran rejects the mediation and demands the complete withdrawal of Iraqi troops from its territory. Iraq states that it is prepared to reach a settlement provided that "Iran recognizes Iraqi sovereignty over its territories and waters."

September 30, 1980. The Soviet Union states that the combatants "will achieve nothing by reciprocal devastation, bloodshed, and the disruption of each other's economies," and calls on them to settle their disputes at the negotiating table.

October 3, 1980. U.S. President Jimmy Carter says his country will take all the necessary steps to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie says in his turn that "the U.S. is holding talks with

its allies concerning possible action" in connection with the Iran-Iraq conflict. Additional U.S. naval vessels are dispatched to the Arabian Sea.

October 8, 1980. The U.S.S.R. warns: "The Persian Gulf region, like any other region of the world, is the sphere of the vital interests of the states of the region and not of any other states. And no one has any right to meddle in their affairs from the outside, or play the part of guardians or self-styled keepers of the peace."

October 28, 1980. Ayatollah Khomeini rejects any idea of a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

December 10, 1980. The Soviet Union puts forward a plan for the normalization of the situation round the Persian Gulf based on what the parties concerned can really do with regard to the interests of the nations of the region.

The plan provides that no foreign military bases be set up in the region, and no force or threat of force be exercised against the Persian Gulf countries; that no one should interfere in their domestic affairs; that the non-aligned status chosen by the states in the region be respected; and that no obstacles or danger be created for normal commercial exchanges and the use of sea communications linking the states of the region with other countries of the world. It is at this juncture that the world hears: "To the imperialist doctrine of aggression and diktat with regard to the Persian Gulf countries, we counterpose the doctrine of peace and security."

Later, the Soviet Union repeatedly refers to the problems of the Iran-Iraq war, insisting on hostilities ceasing as a matter of urgency and proposing concrete steps to this end. It will suffice to mention the statement of the Soviet government of January 9, 1987.

The U.S. administration, though, took a different stand. The Persian Gulf war furnished a suitable pretext for the U.S. and its allies to build up their military presence there. Moreover, the intensification and expansion of the conflict was fostered by the secret operations carried out by Washington to sell arms to Iran, which also involved Israel, the major ally of the U.S. in the Middle East.

The exposure of the dealings between the United States, Israel and Iran escalated into the major scandal known as Irangate. To smooth over the impression that the U.S.'s behavior produced on the Arab countries, Iraq's allies, Washington arranged some "information leaks." Some high-ranking officials in the U.S. administration had the word spread among the Arabs that it is not Iran that the United States is helping but Iraq, going so far as to guide Iraqi interceptors to their targets.

Fogging the atmosphere around these "leaks" with batches of "confirmations" and "denials," the U.S. administration is being far from equivocal in its practical policy. In the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman it has built up a strong U.S. naval presence which, under the pretext of escorting Kuwaiti tankers, is openly sailing the seas as if asking for trouble, ostensibly accidental, to obtain "a legitimate pretext" for aggression.

Iranian victims of the senseless war.

From Time (U.S.A.)

The buildup of U.S. naval muscle in the region has been one of the reasons for Teheran's refusal to abide by the latest Security Council resolution, resolution 598, which calls for a ceasefire and peaceful negotiations. By its actions, the United States is violating one of the clauses of the resolution, for which the U.S. delegate voted.

The war is entering its eighth year....The politicians continue to argue about who is violating this or that resolution, and to refine the wording of the terms in draft settlements. Arms dealers count their profits, and oil monopolies the dividends from increases in oil price.

But what is good for some is the ruin of others. According to U.N. estimates, upwards of a million people, including women and children, have been killed in the seven years of the war. Over a million Iranians and 300 thousand Iraqis have been crippled. The material damage has topped 500 billion dollars. No financial figures can express the misery of the bereaved families, the sufferings of the millions of people who have no roofs over their heads as a result of bombings, or after flight from areas ravaged by the war. The economies of the two countries are in a shambles. Dozens of factories are at a standstill, all oil export earnings are being contributed to the war effort. The hostilities persist in spite of almost continuous attempts to resolve the conflict through the mediation.

* * *

Such is the record of the early stages of a war that drags on with varying degrees of success. In the West, it has been called "the forgotten war."

The Soviet Union has repeatedly warned that in the conditions of general world tensions, any regional conflict is fraught with the danger of escalating into an international clash.

Soviet proposals on the settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict are becoming increasingly substantial. This can be illustrated by the following report, which concludes our record.

September 1987. Eduard Shevardnadze, the U.S.S.R. Foreign Minister, met in Moscow with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister M.Larijani. Then he had talks with the Arab League delegation, among whose members was the Foreign Minister of Iraq. At these meetings, the sides discussed the question of a peaceful solution to the Iran-Iraq conflict and of normalizing the situation in the Persian Gulf.

MIKHAIL KRUTIKHIN

Democracy, debts and the military

ANATOLY MEDVEDENKO

Buenos Aires is inconceivable without spontaneous meetings. When two or three Argentines stop in the street and start talking politics they are immediately surrounded by passers-by. Such spontaneous meetings are a sort of barometer of the issues that concern the country at any given moment, and cause anxiety to the man in the street.

When the "guilt syndrome" passes

The main question discussed from various aspects at such meetings (and in parliament and the political parties, for that matter) is connected with the future of the country and its democracy. The question took on special urgency after last April's mutiny by a group of the military. I believe it to have been the first time since December 10, 1983, when the Radical Civil Union headed by Raul Alfonsin came to power, that democracy had been in real danger.

But the normalization of the situation was achieved at the cost of a degree of compromise or, to be more precise, concessions to the rebels. President Raul Alfonsin had to yield to some of their demands. For instance, he dismissed the chief of general staff of the land forces, Hector Rios Erenu, who did not suit the putschists. A number of laws were adopted in the interests of the military. These were certainly influenced by the April events, especialy the so-called law on national reconciliation, which has become known as the law on "forced subordination" which in effect puts an end to court proceedings against the military for their violations of human rights during the dictatorship.

These events have shown that the period when the army remained on the sidelines of political life was probably at an end and that a section of the armed forces, as in the past, was not averse to exerting influence on the government. And the government is now being compelled to take this into account.

For many years the military held undivided sway over the country, and their psychology has developed accordingly. This is something that cannot be easily discarded in only a few years. True, in the first years after the restoration of the constitutional regime, the army did not interfere in political life, but this was explained less by lack of desire on its part than by its state of shock. "Judging by the latest events the military are beginning to emerge from this stupor," I was told by Raul Segura, an Argentine sociologist who specializes in military-political problems.

Indeed, the "guilt syndrome" that many military experienced in respect of both their defeat in the Falklands war and their actions during their seven-year rule, has restrained them over the past three years, compelling them to keep a low profile and refrain from active political involvement. But the feeling of guilt seems to be passing and is no longer a restraining factor. One indication of this is that many officers and generals are beginning to make demands on the authorities, accusing them of disloyalty, even crediting themselves with "waging a struggle against subversive elements."

"What aggravates the problem," Raul Segura continued, "is that somebody in Washington is not happy with the Radicals' policy gradually removing the army from political life and putting an end to the so-called cyclic development whereby military regimes replace constitutional governments with amazing regularity."

This, I believe, is a more serious circumstance than the first, and should not be ignored. The more so in that Argentine-American relations have become somewhat complex since the advent of Raul Alfonsin to power: as distinct from past practice, the president and his government are striving to pursue a foreign policy that accords more with the interests of their own country than with those of the United States. Contacts in the military field have also fallen off. The Argentines are refusing to take part in the Unidas joint naval exercises with the Pentagon. President Alfonsin has abandoned the doctrine of "national security," which effectively bound the armed forces of Latin American countries to the United States.

It is an open secret that in accordance with that doctrine the army was called upon not so much to repulse aggression as to struggle against the "enemy within," that is against progressive organizations.

According to official figures, 9,000 people died or disappeared without trace in Argentina in 1976-83 as a result of the war waged by the army against its own people. However, public human rights organizations give a much more impressive figure - 30,000 Argentines.

And it is in no sense a fortuity that those officers who have undergone special training in the United States are particularly hostile to democratic reforms and methods of government.

It would clearly be naive to hope that Washington will tolerate the loss of its position in those countries where the military dictatorships have been forced to surrender power to political parties. On the contrary, the United States is interested in the growth of anti-government tendencies in the army, and the exacerbation of its dissatisfaction with the activities of the lawful authorities, and thus keep the latter in a state of constant strain and impede the pursuit of an independent policy both inside the country and in the international arena.

Ordinary people ready for sacrifice

The events of April revealed a much more important, indeed, the most important new element in the country's political life - the dramatically raised consciousness of ordinary Argentines, and their readiness to defend the democratic regime even at the cost of their lives. I would say that it is the first time in recent decades that so many people throughout the republic have surged into the squares and streets to say "no" to the danger of a military dictatorship, regardless of differences in their political beliefs and social backgrounds, and their attitude to the Alfonsin government.

I was told in Buenos Aires that when the Campo de Mayo infantry

school situated 30 kilometres from the capital refused to obey the government, hundreds of people from nearby settlements brought their children with them and virtually stormed into the military camp. They encircled the rebels and effectively paralyzed them. They did not leave Campo de Mayo until President Alfonsin arrived to conduct talks with the rebels.

It is important to stress that this was a spontaneous action by ordinary Argentines, not a protest organized by a political party. This was an act of political maturity and, no less importrant, of civic courage, considering that the Argentine military care little about civilians when they are opposed to the authorities.

The change in Argentina in the less than four years of civilian rule is unmistakable. The greatest credit goes to the Alfonsin government for succeeding in laying the groundwork of a bourgeois-democratic system, and convincing the people that a constitutional regime is possible and that political parties can govern the country. The process of strengthening constitutional forms of government is as yet far from complete. It should be remembered that in Argentina military regimes are all but a traditional form of government. Twelve presidents were elected in that country in the period from 1916 to 1983 but only two of them managed to complete their terms of office. The rest were forced to leave the Casa Rosada, the residence of the head of state, and surrender it to the military. The last time this happened was in 1976, and the military terrorized the country for more than seven years.

In the debt noose

The Radical government is not worried solely by problems related to the armed forces. The state of the national economy is giving rise to no less concern. And this has an adverse effect on the overall political situation in the country and on the Radicals' ability to implement their programme to consolidate democracy. The main problem is that of the external debt, and Argentina is unlikely to resolve it in the present conditions. As Jorge Davana, a prominent Argentine economist, noted, "Raul Alfonsin's political opponents are trying to convince us that the roots of the economic crisis are to be found in the Austral plan drawn up by him. But believe me as a specialist that no matter what government works out a plan, be it Radicals or Peronists, it is doomed to failure from the outset because the burden of debt and the terms on which the country is obliged to service it hold it back."

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Austral plan is far from perfect if only, because it provides for a cure for economic ills at the expense of wage and salary earners and not the monopolies. Jorge Davana is right in saying that the external debt is not only putting a brake on the economic development of Argentina and other countries in Latin America, which have an aggregate debt of 380 billion dollars (!), but is also exacerbating the crisis. What development can there be when in 1984 and 1985 alone Argentina spent about 11 billion dollars on paying interest alone instead of investing it in the national economy? Moreover, the country has to repay the initial loan itself. The most amazing thing is that despite all the payments the debt is not shrinking but growing. When the Radicals came to power it amounted to 43 billion dollars while now it already exceeds 52 billion.

There is no need to remind the reader that every new credit is granted on ever tougher terms and that this leads to stagnation and a slump in industry, the growth of the army of the unemployed (there are now over 1.5 million totally or partially unemployed in the country), and a further deterioration in the living standards of the population at large and this, naturally, makes them dissatisfied with the government's performance.

In other words, the problem of the external debt is not so much an economic as a political problem and should clearly be solved by political means. Alfonsin has made some efforts in this direction. In particular, he tried to create a Latin American front of debtor countries in order to work out a joint strategy at the talks with the IMF and other U.S.-controlled Western financial creditor organizations. This idea, however, did not get the support of several states. Neither have other measures produced results.

The grave economic problems facing the Alfonsin government undoubtedly influenced the results of the September 6 elections of governors, as well as to the lower chamber of parliament and the provincial and communal legislatures. The Justicialist Party won more votes than the ruling Radical Civil Union in 15 of the 22 provinces. The Union also lost an absolute majority it had in the lower chamber, though it has retained more seats than the Justicialist and other parties. The Radicals also have more seats in the upper chamber - the Senate - the election to which was not held.

The election returns have revealed a considerable polarization of political forces and a certain swing of the electorate to the Justicialist Party, especially in the industrial and densely populated areas. At the numerous rallies organized during the election campaign the Justicialist candidates attacked the government's economic policy and its talks with the International Monetary Fund, and voiced concern over the future of the democratization process now under way in the country.

Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires students protesting against the amnesty for the military criminals. Written on the masks are the names of victims of the military authorities.
Photo from the Stern magazine

The keys to stable prices

At the 7th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD-VII), held in Geneva this summer, the head of the Soviet delegation, Minister of Foreign Trade Boris Aristov, signed, on instructions from the Soviet government, the agreement on the establishment of the Common Fund for Commodities.

The signing of the agreement by the Soviet Union was a conspicuous event in international economic life. To quote UNCTAD Secretary-General Kenneth Dadzie, it was "a good sign of the Soviet Union's increasingly active participation in international economic cooperation for development in accordance with the concept of internatioonal economic security put forward by the Soviet Union and reflected in the agenda of the conference as the need to create a more predictable and favourable situation in the world."

Following the Soviet Union, the agreement on the Common Fund was signed by Côte d'Ivoire and Bulgaria, and ratified by Peru. Madagascar, Costa Rica, Portugal and Thailand have stated their intention to ratify the agreement in the nearest future. As a result, the number of states that have signed the agreement has reached 116, and a total of 95 have ratified it. And although the United States, the biggest trading country in the world, refuses to sign the agreement, the joining of the fund by the Soviet Union and the above-mentioned countries is helping mobilize the necessary financial resources for the fund to go into operation shortly. And this, in turn, will make it possible to start to implement the UNCTAD Integrated Programme for Raw Materials and increase the number of international commodity agreements.

The forthcoming entry into force of the agreement on the Common Fund is attracting the attention of business circles and economists in many countries. The developing states are pinning special hopes on the fund. In the opinion of Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance Bernard Chidzero, who presided over UNCTAD-VII, the Common Fund will protect all states from drastic fluctuations in prices of primary commodities, which have an extremely adverse effect on their economies. In his opinion, the creation of the Fund on the basis of principles of equality and sovereignty will also contribute to the establishment of a new international economic order.

The U.S.S.R. constantly comes out in favour of normalizing international trade and creating a stable and secure situation on the world market, and has supported the UNCTAD Integrated Programme from the outset. It also supported the idea of the Common Fund. On signing the agreement to establish it, the U.S.S.R. thereby pledged itself to deposit in the fund's first account its contribution, set at 5.8 per cent,to its authorized capital."Our country proceeds from the premise that the effective implementation of the agreement on the Common Fund will promote the development of mutually advantageous internatioonal trade and make a practical contribution to the creation of a democratic, stable trade system ensuring economic security for all states," Mikhail Gorbachev noted recently in his message to the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

What leaps to the eye is the negative attitude of the United States, although it took part in drafting the agreement on the fund, and signed it back in 1980. But after the Reagan administration took office, the United States refused to ratify the agreement.

Most other Western countries have acceded to the agreement on the Common Fund. But lately some of them have been expressing doubts as to the need for the fund's first account, although the money deposited in it will make it possible to stabilize prices on world commodity markets. On the other hand, they are stressing in every way the importance of the second account, whose purpose is to finance development projects. For the most part, the Western participants explain their preference for the second account by the ineffectiveness of some international commodity agreements (for instance, on tin) which failed in the 1980s to prevent a drop in the prices of the commodities encompassed by them.

One realizes, of course, that international commodity agreements operate in conditions of spontaneous price-forming in the world capitalist economy. In recent years the unfavourable situation in Western countries and stuctural changes in their economies have brought about a drastic decline of prices for primary commodities. If this situation continues for long, it is likely that the Common Fund will expend its own and attracted financial resources without succeeding in raising prices to their former level. But does this mean that the international commodity agreements and the fund are ineffective? Not at all, but only if we do not view them as a sort of panacea for all the evils of the spontaneous world market.

Such mechanisms for stabilizing prices are only called upon to cushion drastic price fluctuations, but they are hardly capable of keeping prices on one level for long, notwithstanding fluctuations in the world economy and structural changes in the market for this or that commodity. It was just such an unrealistic aim that was set by the international agreement on tin, resulting in the collapse of the agreement and a drastic fall in prices. In other words, to be effective, commodity agreements should be sufficiently flexible, and unattainable goals should not be set.

International commodity agreements have existed already for decades. Their participants have accumulated considerable experience of work in conditions of both high and sluggish demand on the world commodity markets. In those cases where the participants in agreements set themselves attainable objectives - to keep prices within agreed limits for a certain period of time - they succeeded in realizing them.

An example is offered by the international agreement on natural rubber, elaborated in 1979. In 1983 it kept prices from growing beyond set limits, while at times of luke-warm demand in 1982 and 1985, it prevented them from falling. Subsequently prices again stabilized at a level close to the average price stipulated by the agreement.

Two years ago the UNCTAD Committee on Commodities analyzed the performance of international commodity agreements and noted that their effectiveness depends first of all on the flexibility of the mechanism of the given agreement, and the speed with which it can react to changing conditions on the world market. Another important condition of effectiveness, in the UNCTAD Committee's opinion, is the participation in the agreements of the biggest exporters and importers of commodities, and the observance of their rights and obligations as provided for by these documents. It is believed in UNCTAD circles that the creation of the Common Fund will make it possible to raise the effectiveness of already existing commodity agreements, and help draw up new ones covering commodities included in the Integrated Programme, as financial shortages were among the main obstacles impeding their conclusion.

This invigoration of multilateral cooperation in the commodities sector of the world economy is an inspiration to many developing countries, for which the export of raw materials is the main and often only source of foreign currency

Robert Mugabe, chairman of the non-aligned movement, congratulates Soviet Foreign Trade Minister Boris Aristov on the signing of the agreement on Common Fund for Commodities. Photo by author

earnings. The solution of pressing problems of development - the struggle against hunger, poverty and disease, repayment of the external debt, and social and economic progress - depends in many ways on the growth of their export of raw materials. The creation of the Common Fund also meets the interests of countries that import primary commodities. The stabilization of world prices in these commodities will make it possible to control price fluctuations, avoid rising production costs and sustain the overall level of consumption.

Given the growing interdependence of states, it is difficult if possible at all, to resolve the international economic and financial problems confronting them through the efforts of individual countries or even separate groups of countries. This requires that all members of the world community pool their efforts, regardless of their level of development and socio-political systems. The Common Fund for Commodities provides for just such a merging of efforts in an important sector of the world economy - the production of and trade in commodities.

VLADIMIR CHEKLIN
Head of the Department of International Economic Organizations, the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Foreign Trade

DETAILED INFORMATION

Integrated Programme for Raw Materials (adopted by UNCTAD-IV in Nairobi in 1976). This includes a set of measures to develop the multilateral cooperation of interested countries on 19 commodity markets: bauxites, manganese, phosphates, iron ore, tin, copper, cotton and cotton yarn, hard fibres and products, jute and articles from it, tropical timber,natural rubber, bananas, cocoa, coffee, sugar, tea, vegetable oils and oil seeds, meat, hides and skins.

One of the Integrated Programme's main tasks is to ensure stable conditions for trade on these commodity markets. It should ensure, for exporter countries, a guaranteed income from the trade in primary commodities and, for importer countries, the delivery of raw materials at acceptable prices and in sufficient quantities. This stabilization of commodity markets suits both exporters and importers, and is achieved by means of international commodity agreements. At present they encompass 9 of the 19 raw materials included in the UNCTAD Integrated Programme.

International commodity agreements are concluded with the aim of expanding trade, avoiding drastic fluctuations in prices of primary commodities, and alleviating the difficulties caused either by surpluses or shortages in them on the world market.

A special role among such agreements is played by those that are capable of exerting a stabilizing influence on world prices. This is achieved by purchasing a given commodity for the agreement's so-called buffer stock when prices fall below the agreed level, and selling out this stock when prices exceed this level. Sometimes this mechanism for stabilizing prices is supplemented by measures to restrict the delivery of commodities to the market by the participants in the agreement, when prices fall below the minimum level, or to increase deliveries when prices exceed the maximum level (international agreement on cocoa). The mechanism for stabilizing prices can also be based on export quotas determined for exporter countries, depending on the state of demand and movement of world prices (international agreement on coffee).

There are also international commodity agreements setting themselves the task of expanding the export potential of developing countries and at the same time increasing consumption and the demand for a particular raw material. They envisage various measures for raising the efficiency of production, quality and crop yields. Their participants also strive to increase the share of primary commodity producers in its processing, tansportation and marketing.

The Common Fund for Commodities serves as a financial basis for international commodity agreements operating within the framework of the UNCTAD Integrated Programme. The agreement to set it up under the aegis of UNCTAD was worked out in 1980. The Common Fund is a sort of international bank with the function of crediting commodity agreements so as to sustain stable prices. The fund also grants loans to finance projects for expanding production, use and demand with regard to raw materials. For this purpose the fund has two separate accounts.

The money in the first account (also called the "first window") is intended for crediting international commodity agreements that have price stabilization mechanisms. The money in the first account is made up of compulsory donations by member countries of the Agreement on the Common Fund. Depending on the size of their contribution, they get shares in the fund and thus become shareholders of this international bank. The fund can also attract money by selling shares over and above the sum of its nominal capital (356 million account units, or about 430 million U.S. dollars) and getting credits on the international money market. There can also be voluntary contributions to this account. The money in the fund's first account can also be increased by profits accruing on operations to finance commodity agreements. The participants in the international commodity agreements financed by the fund can also make voluntary contributions to the first account.

This flexible system of financing substantially increases the fund's potential for sustaining prices on world commodity markets. It is also advantageous to the participants in commodity agreements because their contributions will account for only a third of the money needed to create buffer stocks to prevent a collapse of prices, whereas the remaining two thirds will come from the Common Fund.

The money in the Common Fund's second account is used for granting loans and making non-repayable grants with a view to promoting development within the framework of multilateral agreements. In practical terms the second account is made up entirely of voluntary donations, contributions and easy-term loans. The agreement on the Common Fund does not impose any obligations whatsoever on its participants to make donations to this account. The nominal capital of the second account is set at 212 million account units (250 million U.S. dollars).

THE X-RAY OF TRUTH

VLADIMIR YAVORIVSKY

Well, it would seem to be the end.

Even by present-day perestroika criteria, when we are learning to bring everything we undertake to a conclusion, the Chernobyl story is over. The plot goes back dozens of years, while its tragic culmination began on that night in April when the fourth unit broke out of its straitjacket, and ended when the last seam was welded on its sarcophagus.

Now it's time for the denouement. A hundred thousand people already feel at home in their new residences; they have moved their books, photographs and heirlooms. The Pripyat town Soviet and the Chernobyl District Executive Committee no longer exist - there are no electors.

Our judiciary has also said its last word and put a full stop to the story. A trial, rife with passion, was held in Chernobyl, albeit not as open as many would have wished it to be, even though it was held in a closed Zone with a most rigid admittance system for the duration of the trial.

But the trial was held, and the TASS report on its outcome was heard the world over. Those who were directly to blame for what happened were named and punished, those who were privy to the delay in evacuating the population were implicated.

Recently I was in Slavutich, the youngest town in our country. Its appearance could not have been foreseen by any organization, it is a city "perforce." There is not a single permanent resident there as yet - it is inhabited only by temporary residents, construction workers. However, soon the town will welcome the maintenance workers of the two functioning units of the Chernobyl Atomic Power Plant, now known the world over.

Several documentary films have been shot, and thousands of articles, reportages, verses and poems have been written. The catastrophe has been described in great detail, the exact sequence of events has been established, the heroes and the villains have been named.

And yet Chernobyl does not recede into the past; our reason will not let it go, it has been irradiated by Chernobyl. For the first time the nature of the nuclear age has revealed itself to us so closely and with a real and terrible impact, in an out-of-the-way corner of Ukrainian and Byelorussian Polesie, where the Old Slavonic dialect is still spoken, in villages where there are many traditional healers, fortune-tellers and hunters. In this forgotten place, the last, as it were, to be invaded by the scientific and technological revolution. It came, this revolution, and left the area lifeless for a term that not even scientists can yet determine (the wild, wind-sown fields of grain I saw this year in the Chernobyl district is something I cannot forget).

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Why did it all happen?

Why in our country, when nuclear reactors are aboil almost everywhere in the world?

Why in Chernobyl, when there are "older" nuclear reactors?

Why were the first hours and the first days following the accident so fraught with mistakes by the local authorities on whom the evacuation and protection of the population depended?

Why did certain officials pretended, and still do, that nothing out of the ordinary happened and that things are now even better than they were before the disaster?

The events of April-May of last year, events that sounded like a warning to humanity in its seeming omnipotence, face every honest person who wants to learn something from them with a chain of questions from which not a single link should be omitted.

It is not easy to ask oneself these questions, but it is still more difficult to answer them, if the answers are to honest ones.

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I will not take it upon myself to affirm that everything I saw, everything I felt in those days of May and June, all that I heard from other eyewitnesses is the absolute truth. However, as I spent a long time **there,** when everything was still "bleeding," when people hadn't yet recovered their senses and in the heat of their emotions rashly voiced all their thoughts, I think that I have the right to my own opinion concerning the Chernobyl of 1987.

There was a time when we made a great fuss over the spate of hydroelectric plants built on the Dnieper. Even such a leading artist as Alexander Dovzhenko eulogized the man-made seas, seeing in them the birth of a new aesthetic and a new victory over fitful Nature, in his film "Poem of the Sea." It took only a decade to convince us that the victory so dearly paid for carried in itself the bitterness of defeat. Not only were thousands of villages

CHERNOBYL IS A WARNING TO HUMANITY IN ITS SEEMING OMNIPOTENCE

submerged in the depths of this sea, but also hundreds of thousands of hectares of beneficial Ukrainian black-earth fields, pasture lands and plantations yielding early vegetables; from Khakhovka to Dneproges (the Dnieper hydropower plant) algae and various other water weeds choked up the river. The artificial banks were continuously being eroded, the ecological balance was upset. But we went on with the construction of seas: Kiev...Kanev... Kremenchug... The country needed electric energy - so we built with all our might! Nobody paid any attention to the timid objections of scientists. Energy was necessary. The greater the area of the new sea - the louder the reports sounded.

Suddenly - atomic energy! Powerful nuclear reactors , clean and tidy, obviating the need for those silly gigantic man-made seas. This seemed indeed the ideal solution. The constructors persuaded us that a nuclear reactor was "safer than a chamber pot under a bed." Faith in the peaceful atom rapidly conquered public consciousness. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were very remote from us, while peaceful atomic energetics were presented as something antipodal to the bomb - so we erased all lingering doubts from our minds. This faith was unshakable, one might say - drugged. And so it remained until April of last year.

No, I do not question the further development of atomic power, I am speaking of something else: why is it that people knowledgeable in this field (scientists, constructors, maintenance engineers and operators, and builders too) also succumbed to this cheerful presumption? Why did they lie not only to us laymen, but to themselves as well? I am not saying that people should have been frightened, but it is a fact that even the maintenance engineers were not aware of the extent of the danger.

Today we write off many things to the years of stagnation. But to apply the same yardstick to Chernobyl would mean that we're exonerating ourselves too easily. If the Zaporozhstal works have been turning out bad metal-

well, we'll forget it if they put out top quality steel today. But the Chernobyl atomic power plant turned out excellent electric power, it was the flagman of the "peaceful atom." Its former director Bryukhanov, now sentenced to ten years in prison, sported a clanging array of orders and medals; the man who headed the construction of the power plant, Kysyma, wore a Gold Star medal of Hero of Socialist Labour, as well as the badge of a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine. Everything was not only decorous - it was excellent.

Now we can already freely admit that only one person (who barely escaped being expelled from Pripyat), Lyubov Kovalevskaya, a sharp-tongued journalist on the staff of the small Pripyat newspaper, Tribuna Energetika, indomitable in her opinions, warned the public from the pages of Literaturna Ukraina that there was a barely discernible foretaste of possible disaster in flourishing Pripyat. This warning did not come from scientists, from researchers who, by the responsibility of their profession, their education, erudition, knowledge and civic conscience should have - just in case - ensured against some infinitesimal fortuity by creating a model of an accidental breakdown and working out a variant for the behavior and actions of the personnel. This minimum at least. Only a provincial journalist, a young woman whose future hung in the balance, had enough courage Cassandra-like to publicize the truth. She was saved by the accident - however bitterly ironic that may sound. Recently Lyubov Kovalevskaya described, on the pages of the selfsame Literaturna Ukraina, the "moral" climate that reigned in the upper echelones of the municipal autorities and the administration of the atomic power plant, the "internecine dissensions" between the "royalty", the hypertrophied administrative ambitions of the director of the plant, of the First Secretary of the Pripyat Party Committee and of the construction chief. What people were afraid of here was not the possibility of a breakdown in one of the four units, but of being exposed to the slightest criticism. The atomimc power plant nurtured and fed them, and brought them glory and honours; for the time being it made them invulnerable, exalted them in their own eyes; it insidiously turned their heads with a semblance of unaccountability and omnipotence, and then, catching them unawares, took its revenge with the explosion of the fourth unit.

Even when a pillar of radioactive fumes was soaring into the sky over the city, when people trod on radioactive debris emitting hundreds of Roentgens, when the unit was ablaze - even then they believed that they woulod be shielded from "above," while the "lower strata" would, as always, say nothing. There was a deathly fall-out of nuclides over Pripyat, children and adults were already inhaling radioactive iodine, but they were still thinking of how to cover up, to keep it a secret. At five o'clock in the morning, when **what** had happened at the fourth unit and the **dimensions** of the catastrophe were already apparent, Bryukhanov, in answer to an inquiry from one of the chiefs of the Kiev regional Civic Defence, said: it's merely a fire on a roof, we'll put it out!

Now they say they were afraid of a panic arising in the town, and that they concealed the truth for the benefit of the inhabitants of Pripyat. I recall the very first Party meeting of the atomic power plant personnel following the accident. It took place in the zone, in the former "Fairy-Tale" Pioneer camp to which those who were not indifferent to the fate of the plant had returned. Shaken by all that had happened, these people strained to be there, at the still blazing unit, hungrily waiting for news of their evacuated wives and children, already aware of the fact that their families would not return to these places in the near future. The meeting was held outdoors, and all the residents of the camp attended it. Voices were hoarse (the air was still saturated with radioactive iodine, and there was a metallic taste in our mouths). In accordance with the old, pre-catastrophe tradition, the presidium included the secretary of the Regional Party Committee Malomuzh, the first secretary of the Pripyat Party Committee Gamanyuk, the director of the plant Bryukhanov, the secretary of the plant's Party committee Parashin. The meeting opened rather sluggishly while the "regular" speakers had the floor, but when those who formerly rarely ascended the rostrum began to rise from their places, the scenario scripted by the secretary of the local Party committee exploded. I remember how one of the speakers, choking with emotion, said: "I'll be at the plant until I get a double, even a triple dose, I won't leave the zone while I am able to stand on my feet. But all the rest of my life I'll devote to the finding out by whose orders our children, our families were detained in the contaminated city. Why were our superiors afraid to tell us the truth? Why were we not trusted then?"

Many members of the presidium hung their heads and hid their eyes. The speakers named the deserters who, only yesterday, had taught them how to live, while for themselves they tore off the biggest piece of the pie they could get. This was an outburst not of anger, but of the truth that these people needed as we need air. Oh, no, the town would not have given in to panic if it had been told the truth. Possibly, somebody might have run to save his personal effects, but as I listened to these people I understood: the people would have withstood.

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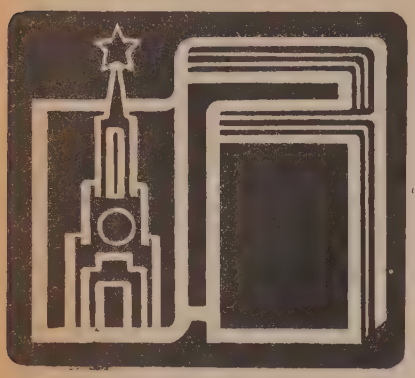
It may well be affirmed, after an analysis of many facts concerning the days before and after the accident, that the probability of a breakdown (even of a purely theoretical one) did exist. It appeared and was noticed by many honest people in the gap between words and deeds, between two moralities - the ostentatious, the rostrum display, and everyday life. This gap cut through the minds and hearts of many executives. They preened themselves with standing at the very peak of scientific and technical progress and forgot about elementary folk wisdom: the higher you climb the further you fall.

CHERNOBYL HAS BURNED OUT MUCH FALSEHOOD AND BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE TRUTH, THE HEROISM OF OUR PEOPLE, THEIR SELFLESSNESS, THEIR STAUNCHNESS AND THEIR PROFOUND MORALITY.

Today scientists (the Grodzinsky brothers from Kiev) assert that the construction of an atomic power plant in Chernobyl was a serious mistake: an area between three large rivers of the Ukraine (the Dnieper, Desna and Pripyat) supplying water to the entire republic, proximity to the water table and sandstone and, finally, the wind rose continuously pointing towards Kiev. It is said that the Ukranian government at the time was warned by Paton and other scientists but they were not heeded. Many of those who adopted the decision are already dead, or are sitting at home nursing their grandchildren. However, they too are to blame for the breakdown. The country has paid an exorbitant price for their armchair arbitrariness. The cost cannot be calculated in financial terms. The people who were merely evicted from their native places by the nuclear catastrophe are not just migrants for whom excellent new homes, better than the ones they were forced to leave, have been built, and whose losses have been completely compensated for - they are also people with scorched memories that will suffice for even their grandchildren. Not only did they remain in their villages throughout the dramatic week following the accident, but they also left forever their native villages, their sacred places, the graves of their ancestors. I visited the new villages built within one summer in the Baryshevka District of Kiev Region. Everything was spick and span: the houses, the streets, the watermains, schools, hospitals and kindergartens. Of an evening people get together on somebody's bench near a fence and reminisce about the other, pre-catastrophe, life. It was not an ideal one, perhaps less comfortable than here, but the nostalgic feeling for their native villages will remain with them throughout their lives.

I remember old Lesya Kozak from Zalesye, a village in the vicinity of Chernobyl, whom I met among the evacuees last year in May. She was "caught", together with her cow, by some young militiamen in empty Zalesye, removed from danger and evacuated almost by force to Makarov district. Her family was not large - she, her cow and a calf. The drivers of the cattle trucks managed to lose



Book parade

"Books in the Service of Peace and Progress" is the traditional slogan of the Moscow International Book Fair. This year's Sixth Moscow Fair had a record number of participants: more than 3,000 firms from 103 countries, 13 international and three national organizations. The exhibition aroused great interest in book lovers and specialists. As usual, numerous contracts between Soviet and foreign book-selling organizations and publishing houses were signed. New Times had its own stand at the exhibition.

Below, our correspondents report.

The entrance to the Chinese section at the exhibition was hung with traditional Chinese lanterns. Among the 3,000 books, pride of place was given to albums of old paintings and architecture that seemed to invite one to make a trip to ancient China. Other sections acquainted visitors with present-day China and its achievements in areas ranging from acupuncture to space exploration.

The most frequent question asked at the exhibition was: "Where can I get this book?" The solicitous attendants readily explained that many of the new Chinese books on display would soon be available through Druzhba, Moscow's biggest bookshop specializing in foreign publications. The Soviet firm Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga has bought almost all the books exhibited by China.

We learned another welcome piece of news from Zhang Depu, who represents

her precious breadwinner, the cow, so Granny Lesya, finding herself for the first time in her life so far from home, made her way back, on foot. She walked through Kiev, through Vyshgorod, bypassing military and militia posts, taking trails known only to herself and at last reaching her own threshold; in the woods she found her cow that had gone wild; then she planted her vegetable garden and whitewashed her cabin. Without all this her life would have stopped and lost all sense. Here were her roots, here was her country. In this manner she lived for several days until she was spotted by monitoring militiamen. By last autumn she had been alloted half of a new house in Makarov District, complete with a cowshed, but she lived for almost the entire summer in her native Zalesye. "Sonnies, don't you touch me, here I'll live longer than there. Out there homesickness is worse than radiation."

Is it possible to measure the nervous tension and brakdowns suffered by the residents of Kiev during the first days and night following the accident? Measurable are only the incompetence of many persons responsible for information and for human health, their fear of displeasing higher auithorities and of losing their comfortable jobs. The May Day demonstration in Kiev, with our children marching in its ranks - was it necessary? The tailored semi-information given out by the newspapers and television opened up a wide field for sinister conjectures and rumours. Then, too, the mass media reports about "nightingales singing over Pripyat" evoked an antagonistic reaction: oh, that means that something is being concealed from us! How much public money was spent on civil defence in our towns and villages, how many ringing reports were written on drills allegedly conducted! But even in Pripyat, a town of nuclear scientists, of employees of an atomimc power plant, many people had no idea of how to protect themselves against exposure to radiation. (Yura Dobrenko, head of a section in the Pripyat Komsomol Committee, strolled the whole post-catastrophe day in the streets of Pripyat with his little son). Yes, fearless nurses delivered potassium iodide powders, going from flat to flat, but the head doctor of the city's sanitary unit, Vladimir Pecheritza, took this decision without the sanction of the municipal authorities and he was all but accused of being alarmist.

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Indeed, Chernobyl has revealed many things; what happened there has burned out much falsehood and brought to light the truth, the heroism of our people, their readiness to sacrifice themselves, their staunchness and their profound morality that helped them withstand the ordeal of Chernobyl.

Those who are now serving prison terms (incidentally, the relevant article in our criminal code, it seems to me, is "not ready" for the scale of such a crime) will now have time to comprehend their guilt. However, let those who were not brought to book also think it over. And the guilt of each one of us is no figure of speech; it is a real test of one's conscience, of one's civic attitude: didn't we play up to the Bryukhanovs, and pander to their rank and whims. Yes, it was we, all of us together, who created the climate in which they flourished and became invulnerable. If we do not take this guilt upon ourselves, if we do not learn to tell the truth to ourselves and to others, Chernobyl may be repeated. Not necessarily at atomic power units. Such things can happen in a mine or in a brickyard, on a railway or in a municipal thermal network in the middle of a bitter winter.

This is why Chernobyl must not be consigned to the past. Besides, have we extracted all the lessons it can teach us?

Should atomic power plants be built in proximity to large cities, in densely populated areas of our country? Should we economize on their construction? Are these towns that almost abut on the atomic power plants necessary? What kind of people should control the reactors and what kind of people should head the plants' staff. Are we always morally ready for the utilization of the latest achievements of human thought?

These questions have been posed by Chernobyl. Posed without compromise, posed firmly in a voice hoarse from radiation. It comes from there, from the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Polesye, situated in almost the centre of Europe, where rye now grows wild in the fields, where wild cats mew loudly in the villages; it is the place to which Granny Lesya implores militiamen to permit her to go and weep on the graves of her parents. This land has no future, only a past and the grim, heart-freezing appelation - the Zone, where our civilization has left its traces.

In order to make sure that Chernobyl is really in the past there is a one and only way: to hearken to it, and remember it constantly.

Kiev

the firm Guoji Shudian. As from next year books from China will be sold in three more Soviet cities - Khabarovsk, Vladivostok and Tashkent. There will be a comparable widening of the network of outlets for Soviet publishing houses in China.

Books by Russian and Soviet authors enjoy great popularity with Chinese readers. One section of the Chinese display featured some of the Russian and Soviet books published in China. They included an eight-volume collection of Leo Tolstoy in Chinese, the "Modern Soviet Literature" series, and a five-volume book of "Reminiscences about Lenin." According to the reference book, over the past ten years more than 500 Russian and Soviet titles have been published in China.

By the huge stand displaying dictionaries and reference books, Professor Vladimir Gorelov, a veteran Soviet Sinologist, is talking to the Chinese attendants liberally sprinkling his speech with Chinese proverbs and sayings. And no wonder, for he began to study Chinese 63 years ago.

"I'm glad relations between our countries are improving," he told Soviet and Chinese journalists. "The improvement is very real for me. There was a time when my correspondence with Chinese linguists ceased. But in recent years we have started writing to each other again. I think our peoples have always been and will continue to be drawn to each other. Both the Chinese and Soviet people need friendship."

Last year publishing houses in the G.D.R. issued almost 150 million books which, on a per capita basis, is a record matched by only a handful of other countries. We interviewed Klaus Höpcke, Deputy Minister of Culture of the G.D.R.

Which books by contemporary G.D.R. authors represented at the fair would you single out?

Of the fiction, I would like to mention "The Accident" by Christa Wolf, which describes how people react to an accident at a nuclear power plant, Hermann Kant's novel "The Sum," which deals with the political life of our continent, and the second half of Erwin Strittmater's novel, "The Shop." These books are interesting for the problems they raise. If literature continues to address itself to topical problems, it will make a great difference to life in the republic.

The congress of G.D.R. writers opens in Berlin in November.

At present discussions are under way at meetings of regional writers' organizations. One of the central issues is a writer's readiness to perceive social processes. Writers are focussing their attention on the impact of science and technology and computerization on the human consciousness. They are also concerning themselves with the economic reform and the causes of conflicts in industry.

What Soviet prose works are to be published in German?

This year we're publishing Chinghiz Aitmatov's "The Executioner's Block" and Valentin Rasputin's "Fire." Next year we publish Victor Astafyev's "The Sad Detective's Story," Alexander Bek's "New Appointment," and Daniil Granin's "Die-Hard." We have invited Vladimir Dudintsev to attend the spring book fair in Leipzig. He will read extracts from his book, "White Coats" to German audiences.

One active participant in Moscow book forums is Kevin Maxwell, vice-president of the British Pergamon Books, which acquaints British readers with works published in the U.S.S.R. on topical social and political issues. They recently brought out the second volume of selected speeches and articles by Mikhail Gorbachev.

"The profound positive changes in the economic, social, cultural and other spheres of life in Soviet society are arousing the interest of British people," said Kevin Maxwell. "They are following the Soviet-American disarmament talks closely. Conscious of this, we plan to publish a series of 12 books devoted to all aspects of the current Soviet reform. At this fair we have had discussions with your Copyright Agency on the possibility of an annual collection reviewing the progress of perestroika. These long-term projects will, to my mind, strengthen our contacts with the Copyright Agency: next year the number of Soviet books will increase by a quarter."

Not far from Pergamon Books is the stand of another British publishing house, Dorling Kindersley, Ltd. It specializes in "interest books" - on gardening, looking after pets, photography, and all kinds of sports and medicine.

We asked Michael Thornton of Dorling Kindersley for his impressions.

I'm very pleased. At the fair we have signed many lucrative contracts to translate and publish some of our books in the U.S.S.R.

This is not the first time you've been to a Moscow book fair. How do the last two fairs compare?

To put it briefly, there is much more interest in this year's fair among visitors and participants. The organization is excellent, or at any rate I've had no problems here. I think I should say, however, that the fair has outgrown its premises. Visitors and the participants feel crowded.

We approached Shaarif Bin Abdullah Al Chadjah, commercial director of the council on language and culture from Malaysia, a first-time participant in the Moscow Fair. His organization is disseminating knowledge, culture and language in the whole Southeast Asian region. There are 200 million Malay speakers. It is a language of trade, navigation and craftsmanship which was deliberately pushed into the background during the colonial era.

"After the second world war and Malaysia's independence," he explained, "we faced the task of restoring the authority of the national language. That is why the council on language and culture has mainly exhibited books on culture and literature, dictionaries, and language manuals. We are also interested in buying literature, especially on science and technology. The interest shown here in our country and in our books has surpassed all expectations."

The embattled people of South Africa is represented by Gonum Surgonum Naicker of the African National Congress publishing house. We talked to her in front of shelves filled with books, pamphlets and magazines about the uncompromising struggle against racism and colonialism

"This is my third Moscow book fair," she said. "Each time I meet a lot of people, and all of them in one way or another express their support for the African fighters against apartheid. I have been living in exile in London for more than 20 years. Our publishing house is based in London. But we know that the voice of the ANC reaches its audience. Our publications are known in South Africa and Namibia, and we are proud that we are doing our bit for the struggle of the South African people."

We spoke to only a few of the participants at the exhibition. But even these interviews have made us aware of the main thing: people in publishing seek to communicate because they know that, through their books, they are helping citizens of various countries to get to know and understand each other better. This is extremely important today.

EVGENY VERLIN,
VLADIMIR GALIN and
KONSTANTIN ISAKOV

"Roll over, Beethoven"

The Black Coffee rock group performing.

Photo by S. Bermenyev

This, one of the first Beatles titles, may well be seen as expressing a programmatic goal of the rock movement. Over the twenty-odd years since its birth, the new trend has gone a long way towards realizing it. Rock passions are running high, with the pitch of the controversy today far beyond the level of past years, when a smart dressing down was regarded as the most appropriate way of dealing with any foreign or Soviet music group.

So far public opinion seems to have no clear criteria for evaluating rock and its social role. Two attitudes predominate: failure to understand and, hence, rejection, on the one side, and unconditional apology, on the other.

Sociological opinion polls show that today rock is firmly top of the list in the musical sympathies of the youth. Interest in it is growing steadily. In Estonia, where one of the polls was conducted, over 75 per cent of young boys and girls are rock fans. And yet it would be premature to declare that rock has won an unqualified victory. Light and pop music have a great following, and over 40 per cent of those polled are fond of folk and classical music. Curiously enough, jazz, the great passion of our parents and grandparents, now brings up to the rear. Contrary to the generally held view, young people in this country prefer our own stars to foreign ones. The Zemlyane /Earthmen/ and the Mashina Vremeni /Time Machine/ are ahead of the Beatles and the Secret Service. Alla Pugacheva and Valery Leontyev are placed higher, for instance, than Adriano Celentano. Vladimir Vysotsky, Bulat Okudzhava and Zhanna Bichevskaya are also high on the list. Of course, it is nice to see this preference for our national music, but one should not absolutize what is merely one aspect of the overall picture. Domestic stars may lead in the hit parades, but this does not mean that they outnumber foreign colleagues in people's record collections or, moreover, in the repertoire of discos.

Many young people, sociologists say, are unable to distinguish between pop, rock and light music. Any piece played in a hard rhythm and involving electronic equipment is rock to them. The deliberate systematic circulation of standardized ideas and musical cliches by the mass media certainly has had its effect. A stable interest has been formed in a schlager that has been depersonalized to the maximum.

The opponents of imitative music devoid of content and fostering consumerist attitudes undoubtedly have a point. But there are no grounds for identifying rock music as a whole with mass culture, and this is precisely what critics of rock often do. Such confusion can be pardoned in one who genuinely advocates spiritual values. Unfortunately however attacks on rock are often intended to conceal the attackers' own creative sterility....

Aesthetic criticism at times betrays a peculiar conception of the social role of rock music. It is alleged to be a sort of Trojan horse. Young people's moral decay and social passivity are depicted as the effect of rock.

There is a disquieting habit of treating all alike, a tendency, inherited from the 1930s, to impose uniformity and regard every deviation from norm as a crime.

Uniformity and universality, the striving to please all and everyone are, rather, characteristics of the pop song.

Rock music is far more selective. Sociologists have analyzed tape recordings by some of our well-known rock groups and discs by various pop ensembles. The latter show relatively little vartiety in mood.

Rock is more varied. All of 76 per cent of pop pieces turn on romance, which only accounts for a quarter of this percentage figure in rock. On the other hand, nearly half of all rock compositions have a bearing on social and moral issues, which only applies to 4 per cent of pop songs.

Strictly speaking, rock is not an entirely novel development. It synthesizes elements of different genres and styles which are comparatively easy to identify, and it treats these elements very freely (from the point of view of the traditional musicology). As a social phenomenon, rock is the symbol of belonging to a particular group of the young. It represents no uniform position, but rather covers every possible youth stance, from global humanism to physical aggressiveness, from active compassion to a passively consumer attitude. Rock motifs are on the air on radio and television round the clock. According to the magazine Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya (Sociological Studies), some young people embrace "heavy metal" or "break dance" just because they are in, others do it as a challenge to the older generation. It is not difficult to cater to the tastes of these groups. But ought we to do so?

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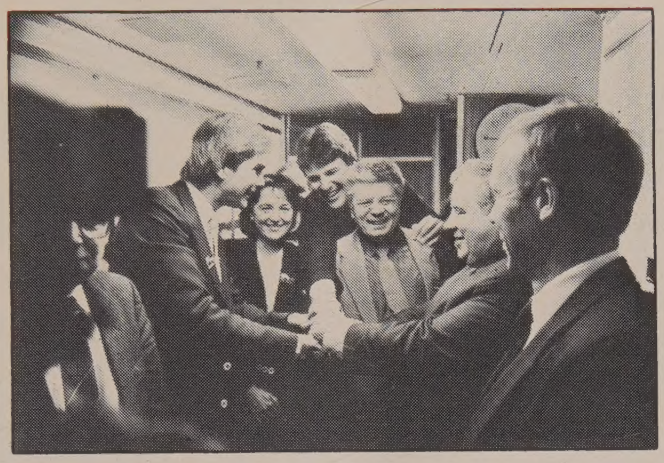
Eye operations on board the "flying clinic"

A plane with an unusual emblem touched down on the runway at Sheremetievo-1. The tail of the plane carried a symbol representing the human eye in the palms of two hands.

In 1982 ophthalmologists from various countries proposed to collaborate on the Orbis project, a special flying clinic for the treatment of eye disease. The United Nations and more than 40 countries backed the initiative. The Orbis clinic has made over 70 trips to Moscow. Besides the U.S.S.R., the eye specialists have visited 45 countries, restoring or improving the sight of 4,500 patients.

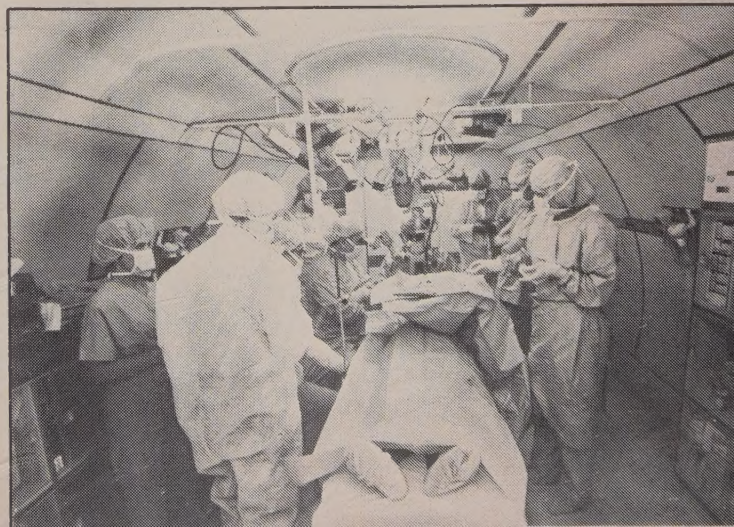


Leading specialists from the U.S., Britain, Japan and other countries work in shifts on board the plane. This time the Orbis has arrived in Moscow to take part in the international seminar sponsored by the interbranch research complex Microsurgery of the Eye. With their Soviet colleagues, the doctors have performed a number of unique operations.

DC-8 plane—Orbis flying clinic.

Performing an operation.

Photos by Alexander Tyagna-Ryadno



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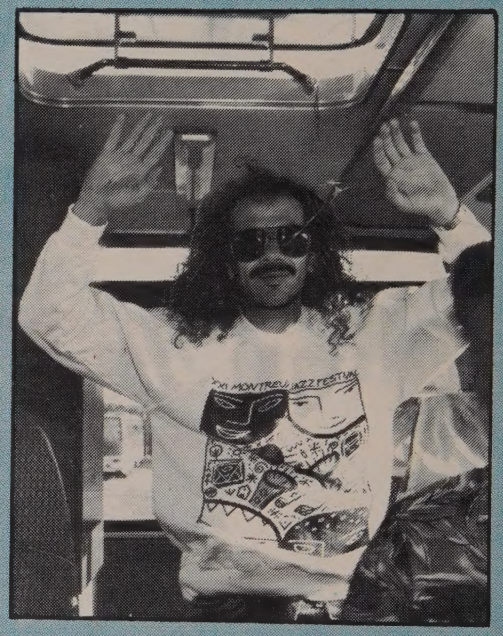

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Stars in Moscow
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